

LIPPINCOTT'S

MONTHLY MAGAZINE

BY FREDERIC REDDALE

FIGS FROM THISTLES



SEVEN SHORT STORIES BY

PRINCE VLADIMIR VANIATSKY

HENRY WYSHAM LANIER

LIZETTE WOODWORTH REESE

PATRICK VAUX

ELLA MIDDLETON TYBOUT

ALMA MARTIN ESTABROOK

JULIET WILBOR TOMPKINS

...

SOME ROMAN CONTRASTS—

BY MAUD HOWE

WHAT MAN IS TO A BIRD

BY DR. CHARLES C. ABBOTT



MAY

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MAY, 1904



FIGS FROM THISTLES

BY FREDERIC REDDALE

Author of "The Other Man," "An Heir to Millions"

I.

"I MUST know to a certainty just where I stand, Mr. Wythe," said Lady Vergil emphatically.

The eminent solicitor bowed deferentially.

"Precisely," he assented. "The situation is simplicity itself. When your husband died he willed to you absolutely what property he could legally dispose of,—to wit, his personalty, comprising money in bank, horses and carriages, some pictures, and the family jewels,—all in trust for your son and his heir, the present Sir Tristan Vergil. He had no testamentary power over the Midwood estates, they being entailed in the male line, subject, however, to a yearly charge of two thousand pounds to be paid to you for life, which was secured to you at your marriage."

Her Ladyship nodded briskly.

"I know all that," she exclaimed rather tartly. "But about the succession?"

"The estate is strictly entailed, as I have said. Your son is the tenth baronet. If he marries and has a son, Midwood descends to him in turn, of course."

"But Tristan will never marry, I fear. You know somewhat of him and his odd ways, Mr. Wythe."

The latter nodded understandingly.

"In that event, what?" demanded Lady Vergil.

"If such should prove the case, at his decease the property goes to the next of kin in the male line, young Julian Vergil."

"Never, if I can help it!" snapped her Ladyship vehemently. "I hate the whole tribe! Old Julian Vergil did his cruel best to hinder my marriage to my dear husband, as you must well remember, Mr. Wythe. I will go to any length to keep his son out of the succession."

The solicitor bowed and smiled diplomatically.

"Exert your authority as head of the family, then. Marry Sir Tristan to some nice girl, Lady Vergil, and pray that he may have a son and heir. That is your only hope."

"I am afraid it is a hopeless hope, Mr. Wythe," sighed her Ladyship. "Apparently he is as well in body as you or I,—six feet of sturdy English manhood to look at,—but mentally he is practically an infant. He has absolutely no pride, and no tastes or ambitions beyond the society of the stables or the village alehouse. Sorry am I, his mother, to admit it! We have always had the best expert medical advice that money can procure, but all that the doctors do is to shake their stupid heads, look wise, and assure me that it is one of the most interesting cases known to what they call their *materia medica*! Arrant humbugs, all of them!"

Her Ladyship possessed that which in her cook would have been called a temper.

Mr. Wythe smiled deprecatingly.

"Is it so bad as that?" he inquired.

Her Ladyship nodded vigorously.

"Tristan is as good as good can be,—nothing radically vicious or vulgar about him, you know,—but his brain seems to have stopped growing. He sees no society, goes nowhere, shuns my drawing-room as if it were a pest-house, and never speaks two words to a lady if he can help it. One might almost think him a woman-hater. How am I going to get him to propose to any lady who would make him a proper wife? He really knows none in a social sense. Besides, what girl with a scintilla of self-respect would say 'Yes' to that sort of a man!"

She spoke bitterly, her chagrin and disappointment veiling for the moment the mother-love which ever waxes stronger as its object is weaker. The chicken with the broken wing is always the pet and pride of the old hen.

Mr. Wythe sighed sympathetically and furtively consulted his watch. His brougham was at the door; his dinner would be waiting for him at Brompton; all the junior clerks were gone home; the managing-clerk in the outer office had been fidgeting with his overcoat on for the last ten minutes.

"Cannot the entail be broken?" inquired his client, grasping at a straw. "I have heard of such things."

The solicitor shook his head negatively but positively.

"Impossible at this juncture, Lady Vergil. It has been done, of

course, but usually by mutual agreement between father and son or the next heir. It would be useless to approach Mr. Julian Vergil with any such proposition, I am sure. Money would not tempt him, for he has enough already. No; the course I have indicated," he said, as his visitor rose, clasping her fur collarette, "is the only one open to you. Surely your woman's wit—your mother wit," his thin lips twisting into a smile at the verbal play—"will show you a way?"

"Perhaps," was the dubious answer; "but you may count upon one thing, Mr. Wythe: Julian Vergil shall never inherit Midwood!"

And with this vindictive parting sally the great lady swept down the dingy and dusty staircase and into the April fog creeping up from the Thames over the legal purlieus of the Inner Temple.

II.

THE interview just chronicled between Mr. Wyatt Wythe, for nearly two decades the trusted legal adviser to half the county families in Hartshire, and Lady Callidia Vergil, who had come up to London purposely therefor, had for its immediate object a crystallization of the strictly legal situation in the mind of her Ladyship.

Much of what the solicitor told her she had known already, but with the ineptness of a woman to grasp business or technically dry details the exact facts needed a masterful presentation in order to clarify her mental survey of the immediate future.

Never was there a more sorely tried mother, for the case of her only child was even as she had outlined it. Sir Tristan Vergil was unmistakably the ignoble son of a long line of noble sires. At twenty-four, when he should have been in the flush and prime of vigorous young manhood, like all his forbears, he was a mental and a nervous wreck—a neurasthenic, in truth. As the specialists said, it was a beautiful case—from the medico-scientific point of view. This may have been very satisfactory to them, but it was gall and wormwood to Lady Callidia, to whom so barren a diagnosis offered scant hope.

Strange to say, the physical appearance of the young Baronet almost completely belied the bitter facts. Over six feet in height, with the frame of an athlete, though loose and shambling in gait and carriage, he looked and was the picture of rugged bodily health. Sir Tristan's complexion was Saxon pink and ruddy by inheritance; from spending whole days and nights in the open he was brown as a gypsy and as tough. A closely curling crop of golden-brown hair topped a set of features which would have been of almost classic purity had it not been for a sodden and pouchy look about the cheeks and chin. The eyes and the hands, however, told their own tale. The former, of pale blue, were dull and vacant; the latter were nerveless and flabby, the fingers and thumbs habitually curled—never clinched or straight-

ened. In his solitary rambles—he seldom mounted a horse—he rarely carried a stick or a gun, preferring to slouch along, hands in pockets, shoulders stooped, pipe in mouth; the eyes open, but unseeing, the under jaw dropped, the gaze vacant. In dress he was equally careless; the grooms in the stables and the gamekeepers in the Midwood preserves were more smartly attired than their master. His temper was that of a good-natured baby; in speech he was taciturn and monosyllabic, with the limited vocabulary of a child, yet with the accent and intonation of a gentleman.

His native land had just passed through the throes of the Crimea and the horrors of the Mutiny; every loyal and manly heart had thrilled responsively to the heroic twin tales of the charge of the immortal Six Hundred and the equally magnificent relief of Lucknow. Yet the nerveless and dormant soul of the young Baronet was stirred by none of these things. If he heard of them, they awakened no responsive thrills in heart or head.

Surely a most puzzling case. Just when Sir Tristan's infirmity began it would be difficult to say. As a child he was almost precociously bright; at school, up to the age of fourteen, he more than held his own; then he seemed to sink gradually into duncedom; he was dropped at Harrow and they would not enter him at Marlborough; private tutors at home were tried, but could make nothing of the lad, who insisted that the sight of a book made his head ache. When he was sixteen, his father, the ninth baronet, died, and Lady Callidia shortly thereafter relinquished as hopeless all attempts to educate the lad. But if his mind ceased to grow, it was otherwise with his body, and Sir Tristan Vergil, occupant of one of the oldest titles and one of the fairest estates in all Wessex, at twenty-four was outwardly, at least, a morose and moody young animal.

The final realization of it all was a cruel blow to his mother. She loved him and yearned over him till it sometimes seemed as though her heart would burst. On Tristan were centred all her hopes. She hated the collateral line of Vergils with a fiery and passionate dislike; the very thought of one of them stepping into the shoes of her husband and her son filled her with consuming rage and unspeakable bitterness. And, yet, what could she do?

In the natural course of events Sir Tristan would have married some girl of his own rank and perpetuated his line. But who would wed a mere clod of a man, who could not be counted or prevailed upon to make even the first polite advances on his own behalf?

It would be little short of a crime to mate any woman to such a husband, supposing one complaisant enough could be found. Would even a cook or a servant-wench consent to raise up future Vergils to such a husband? And yet—and yet—there must be some way out of

the maze—some solution of the problem, How to provide an heir for Midwood.

So mused Lady Callidia during the railway journey towards home. The solicitor's words rang in her ears to the insistent rhythm of the flying train as the swift wheels clicked over the metals: "Marry—Sir—Tristan—to—some—nice—girl; Marry—Sir—Tristan—to—some—nice—girl!" It was easy to say, yet how difficult to carry out! But it must, it should, be done, she resolved, and at any cost.

For in that little wisp of a woman was concealed and concentrated a perfect fury of determination and resource. She had ruled her husband with firm but loving tact, although he never suspected the fact; in an earlier generation she would have been the toast of the shire; earlier still, knights in armor would have jousted for her favor; in defence of her own fireside or of her rights, real or fancied, she could be unscrupulous as an Elizabeth or one of the Medici.

Before her mental vision she marshalled in review all the marriageable girls of the county. Any one of half-a-dozen eligibles would make a good mistress for Midwood—there was really an embarrassment of riches in that respect. In all probability she would have to do both the match-making and the courting, even if she could induce Sir Tristan to fall in with the scheme—which, she foresaw, would be extremely difficult.

But when the station wagon set down her Ladyship at Midwood she had come to no definite conclusion as to a plan of campaign beyond the one initial fact that Tristan must marry, and that right early.

III.

A GLORIOUS day in June—and an English June at that. The hedge-rows and lanes of all Hartshire were aflame with dog-roses and late hawthorn blossoms, while the pale yellow laburnum drooped its clusters of pendant blossoms in rich profusion, until the air was heavy with Nature's sweet odors.

There was no lovelier spot in all the broad land of Wessex than Midwood, the red-tiled cottages of a pretty and typical village clustering around the square, ivy-clad church-tower and Rectory, which in turn nestled close against the ring-fence enclosing the Vergil estates—a thousand acres of noble timber and jealously guarded preserves.

The occasion was a garden party at the Rectory, the incumbent of which was the Reverend Henry Persis, a clergyman somewhat poor in tithes but rich in daughters. There were seven of these, from Janet, the eldest, aged twenty-two, down to baby Ellice, rising five, to say nothing of two lusty boys away at school. So that the quiver of the reverend gentleman was reasonably full, while it was not so long since Mrs. Persis might have been likened to Dickens's lady who gloried in

her "nine small children and one at the breast." But in polite Hartshire circles they never spoke, save in whispers, of anything so plebeian as nursing mothers or unweaned infants.

To the garden party were bidden all the notables of the neighborhood of both sexes, and among them was Lady Vergil, socially the most prominent personage present.

These more or less rural festivities were—and are, for that matter—pretty much of a pattern. There is, perhaps, a small marquee for the oldsters who do not like damp grass; a tennis- or an archery-court and a croquet-ground for the youngsters; floods of lemonade, tea, and weak claret-cup by way of refreshment; the dowagers and the chaperones wisely seek the shade, where they talk scandal and gossip with such men of their way of thinking as happen to be present. To the younger element the occasion affords many a chance for flirtation or better. Sometimes, also, the onlookers see most of the game.

Lady Vergil, having no fear of rheumatism or asthma, sat out the afternoon under a wide-spreading yew with a mischievous and cynical old bachelor, a certain Ralph Madoc, who, said Dame Rumor, had once worshipped at the shrine of her Ladyship when she was the pretty Callie Treherne, thirty years before. They were still cronies, however. To him the state of affairs at Midwood was no secret, for he could put his finger on the skeleton in every closet in Hartshire and rattle its bones.

The players from the strenuous tennis-court and the innocuous croquet-ground were breaking up into couples and moving towards the gayly striped tent, passing in review before Lady Vergil and her elderly companion, the latter maintaining a running fire of caustic comment upon each as they passed.

"Fine fellow, Colonel Ingram, and desperately smitten with Miss Carewe; but she'll none of him; Derrick is the favored one there, I fancy. Odd, isn't it, how young people will persist in attaching themselves to the wrong person? There's a pretty mix right before our eyes. Unless I'm much mistaken, Eustace Derrick cares only for Janet Persis, the parson's daughter; but they're both as poor as church mice, and she's too sensible a girl to hang herself like a millstone round his neck, although she is easily the prettiest girl of them all. Then there's Ingram; he'd give all his chances of promotion for a kind word from Serena Carewe, but she's in love with Eustace Derrick. Can't you see it? Plain as the nose on your face, my dear Lady Vergil."

Lady Vergil laughed appreciatively behind her fan. After a certain age, scandal and small-talk take the place of the seductive personal phrases of one's younger days.

"Do you imagine Janet Persis cares for him?"

"Who? Young Derrick? Why, of course, but they can never marry—unless some good fairy leaves either one a pot of gold."

Eustace Derrick, it should be explained, occupied the nominal post of tutor to Sir Tristan Vergil. The tutorship, long outgrown, was a sinecure, for the young Baronet never opened a book; actually Derrick was half secretary, half friend and companion, retained in his odd post chiefly by the solicitations of Lady Vergil, since he was the only person who wielded any real influence over the Baronet—which was the more singular, perhaps, because they were nearly of an age, and had been boys together at Harrow, where young Vergil fagged for Derrick in that curious reversal or obliteration of rank which distinguishes the English public school.

But while Tristan Vergil's scholastic career stopped short, Eustace Derrick's led him to Oxford, where he took a double-first, and he might have had a snug fellowship had he been disposed to settle down within the four walls of a college "quad." This he would not or could not do, for even then Janet Persis had cast her glamour over him, and he had various hazy ideas of conquering a competence and making a name for her sake. Meantime, his erstwhile fag needed him, and as the Rectory adjoined Midwood he was loth to tear himself away.

Although Eustace Derrick and Janet Persis were not formally betrothed, it was not for lack of a perfect heart-understanding between them. As yet, marriage on nothing-a-year was an impossibility; and unless something turned up, their lines of life must diverge rather than converge.

For Janet Persis, although deeply in love with the handsome scholar, was too prudent to let her heart run away with her head. She knew she must make a brilliant marriage; with the good looks which her glass told her she possessed, there ought to be no difficulty about that, and she trusted to her powers of persuasion and deft management to make Derrick take a sensible view of the matter and release her.

Nor must it be inferred that the girl was utterly heartless or mercenary. She knew that Derrick would marry her in an instant did she whisper the magic word. But in her determination to avoid such a rash step as this would have been for both of them she was actuated as much by consideration for the man and his career as by a shrinking personal horror of wedded poverty. Fate was very cruel, she reflected, for she loved Eustace Derrick dearly; yet for him a rich wife and for her a rich husband were indispensable requisites. And in thus letting her old head rule her young heart she was more to be pitied than blamed.

While Ralph Madoc was rambling on with his cynical comments a daring idea sprang to life in the fertile and rather unscrupulous brain of Lady Vergil—from which at first she shrank in virtuous horror,

then she temporized and dallied with it, and finally took it to her heart.

She was helped and encouraged therein by a chance suggestion from her old friend:

"Why don't you marry your boy to Janet Persis? It would be a splendid thing for her. Midwood needs an heir, you know!"

IV.

"MARRY your boy to Janet Persis! Midwood needs an heir, you know!" The words of Ralph Madoc rang in Lady Callidia's ears, keeping time to the rhythmic beat of the horses' hoofs during the drive home. Perhaps such a marriage could be arranged,—it would be a fine match for a penniless girl,—better than she could reasonably hope for, beauty and well-born though she undoubtedly was. Tristan might be cajoled and drilled into making the necessary advances; if otherwise, it would not be the first time that such an alliance had been arranged by proxy. But after the marriage—what? There must be an heir, and yet, if the scientists were right, that was one of the improbabilities—so far as Sir Tristan was concerned. Then too there was Eustace Derrick to be considered, for without his coöperation, however passive, the daringly unconventional scheme must fail.

"Oh, that I were a man!" she exclaimed to herself over and over again.

But despite her well-bred shrinkings of conscience, her Ladyship's purpose hardened when she thought of the abhorrent possibility of Midwood reverting to Julian Vergil. Ralph Madoc was coming to dinner next day; she would sound him further.

"The old reprobate!" she thought, laughing softly to herself; "I believe he would be delighted at the idea!"

So, on the morrow, dinner was set back for half an hour later than usual, and when Madoc arrived, like all good guests punctual to the minute for which he had been bidden, he was shown into the library, where Lady Callidia awaited him. The long and lofty room was purposely darkened by drawn curtains, although it was still daylight out-of-doors, and a solitary reading-lamp wore its opaque green shade. Lady Vergil was seated well without the small radius of light.

"I want to speak to you privately, Ralph," said her Ladyship, after the old bachelor had relinquished the tips of her fingers and taken his favorite stand in front of the now empty hearth.

"You know I am always at your service, Lady Vergil," said the ancient beau with a ceremonious inclination. "Command me in any way."

"It is about Tristan," her Ladyship began, toying nervously with a paper-cutter.

"What's the young dog been doing now—making love to the cook?" inquired Madoc, licking his lips in anticipation of some rare escapade.

"I could almost wish he would; but it's not that, exactly. I have been thinking of what you said yesterday—about—about Tristan and Jenny Persis."

"Oh, I see," responded Madoc. "Not a bad idea, as I'm a sinner. She ought to jump at the chance!"

"Janet is no ordinary girl, remember," put in her Ladyship.

"Poof! They're all ordinary nowadays when it comes to marrying and giving in marriage," grinned the hardened cynic.

"You know what Tristan is—he won't go near a woman if he can help it. He and Janet have known each other since they were children together, but I don't believe he has spoken ten intimate sentences to her in as many years!"

"More fool he!" growled Madoc.

"Such a marriage would literally have to be brought about by some old match-maker such as you or I," said Lady Callidia, "and although I am his mother, I might as well own the bitter truth: Janet would be sacrificed if she married him!"

"Sacrificed to what?" inquired Madoc in amazement.

"To my determination to keep Midwood from Julian Vergil! If Tristan does not marry and have a son, that is what will happen sooner or later. I should haunt the place after my death if that ever came to pass—I am sure of it! It shall not be if I can help it!"

"Easiest thing in the world," exclaimed Ralph Madoc. "Make me your envoy-extraordinary, and I'll guarantee to bring the young lady to terms."

"Ah, but that is not all," said her Ladyship; "of what use is the marriage alone? There must be—you know—oh, why don't you help me?" she exclaimed petulantly. "Don't stand there staring like an owl!"

"Of course, of course," assented Ralph Madoc soothingly; "Midwood needs an heir, as I said yesterday. Well, in the course of human events I should say that was one of the few sure things you could back to win."

"The medical men intimate otherwise," murmured Lady Vergil, her face hidden in the shadow.

Ralph Madoc could not repress a low whistle of astonishment.

"Then there is another contingency," continued her Ladyship. "You hinted yesterday that Eustace Derrick and Janet Persis were in love with each other. Is—not—that—a—possible complication? Or—does—it—suggest—a—certain—unconventional—way—out—of—the—dilemma?" The words dropped slowly and furtively, yet none the less suggestively, from her Ladyship's lips in the semi-darkness of the room.

Ralph Madoc peered into the gloom at the shrinking form of his old friend. A sudden light broke in upon his worldly brain. Was it imaginable that they were both thinking of the same possibility? His first words caused her to start—voicing as they did her own thought of the day before.

"By gad, I wish you were a man, Lady Vergil!"

She thanked the merciful half-light which veiled her burning cheeks from his sight.

"What do you think?" she inquired timorously.

The answer came quickly and decisively.

"Janet will be a sensible girl, I'll almost answer for it. Can you manage Tristan?"

"I will try."

"We must keep Derrick here, of course—that is, if you are not afraid of the possible—I might almost say the inevitable—consequences?"

"I am afraid of nothing and will stick at nothing to gain that one end," said Lady Vergil decidedly.

Just then the dinner-gong sounded, and her Ladyship rose. Ralph Madoc ceremoniously offered his arm, and as they walked decorously down the wide, panelled hall he patted reassuringly the little, blue-veined hand that rested in the crook of his elbow, saying:

"Don't take it too seriously; something similar happens every day in the year with not half the justification that the present crisis provides. Remember Brougham's famous epigram."

His hostess signified her gratitude by a quick pressure of his arm, and they both took their places at the table. Eustace Derrick joined them, looking singularly out of sorts, and Sir Tristan came slouching in with the soup, Ralph Madoc curiously taking stock of the two men as they sat at meat.

V.

BEFORE and during the foregoing colloquy Eustace Derrick and Janet Persis had been slowly strolling along a woodland path in an unfrequented part of the chase at Midwood. Beneath their feet the soft turf, centuries old, gave forth no sound. On either hand a wall of mossy and lichen-seamed tree-trunks hemmed them in; none save the squirrels, the birds, and the rabbits saw them or heard their murmured words.

A right goodly couple were they; she, tall for her sex, of a well-rounded figure, with a facial contour perfect in its blond loveliness, a complexion like the petal of a blush rose, lustrous brown eyes, and a wealth of reddish auburn hair that rebelliously strove to escape from its meshes of coil and comb.

Tall, dark, and spare of form was Eustace Derrick, with a studious

oval face and an olive complexion; a firm, massive chin and a square, high forehead spoke of manly and masterful power and determination; only a mobile, sensitive mouth, unhidden by a mustache, betrayed the ardent, loving nature of the man and its possibilities for good or for evil.

In a little glade or clearing where the footpath ended, shot athwart with the westering sun's golden haze filtering through the thick greenery, they stopped and faced each other.

"How long must we go on like this, dearest?" queried Eustace. "Every day that we live apart makes it harder to bear. When shall I call you my very own?"

"Oh, it is hopeless—perfectly hopeless," panted Janet in that low-pitched, vibrant, passionate voice which we call contralto. "For you a rich wife, for me a rich husband, are absolute necessities. I should spoil your career and be a weight about your neck, Eustace. When I marry,—if I ever do,—I must sacrifice myself for my family, for the younger girls; they all expect it!"

Derrick made an impatient gesture of dissent.

"I don't see it that way, Janet," he exclaimed. "Your life is your own; what are mere money and position without love? You would be miserable as the wife of any other man!"

"I know it," she murmured, nestling her head on his shoulder.

"Then why not prevent it? I can scrape together a few hundred pounds; let us marry and go to some far-off place,—Australia, for example,—where I can do a man's work in the world. Let us be happy, dearest—we have only one life to live here."

For an instant only did these blandishments, these alluring prospects, swerve the girl. Then she pushed herself from his embrace, saying hurriedly:

"No, no; don't tempt me, Eustace. We should only be miserable! You must not sacrifice your career for me. Put me out of your thoughts; cease your dawdling and dreaming at Midwood; do your man's work at home, here in England, where you belong."

"Is that your final answer?" he inquired sadly, putting both hands on her shoulders and looking deep into her soul. He knew her too well to bandy arguments back and forth. Nor would he, as many men might have done, jealously question her as to the possibility of her having already picked out his successor, for he knew that he alone possessed her love, and that she was simply drifting, with no settled plan in mind, save that she must make what the world would deem a brilliant marriage. And as he gazed at her he was fain to admit to himself that with her beauty she might fairly aspire to the highest prize in the matrimonial lottery, and no one would blame her.

"God help me, it is—it must be!" she exclaimed brokenly. "You

know I love you, Eustace; no other man will ever possess what I have given you. Forgive me, dearest, and let me go for a mercenary, hard-hearted wretch!"

"Never that, Janet,—my peerless one,—I shall never believe you to be that. I think your view is all wrong, but I'll not make life harder for you than you have already made it for us both. Kiss me, sweet—it may be for the last time!"

She yielded herself to him in the complete and final abandonment of a lovers' parting, and he strained her rapturously to him, covering her face with caresses. Then silently they retraced their steps, until they reached a side track which led by a short cut to the Rectory.

"No farther, Eustace, please," she implored. "I cannot bear it!" lifting her tear-darkened eyes to his. Without a word, such was their perfect understanding, and with simply a hand-clasp and a long, lingering look into each other's eyes, they went their separate ways.

VI.

ABOUT a week after the garden party at the Rectory Ralph Madoc made a morning call in that quarter. His time was purposely well chosen. He knew that Mrs. Persis, now a chronic invalid, never left her room before noon, and that, up to the hour named, the six younger Persis girls would be securely muzzled and under lock and key with their governess. The Reverend Henry Persis, Madoc also happened to know, was absent at some diocesan convention. Consequently, he hoped and expected to find Janet Persis alone and approachable. In this case it was not the unexpected which happened. He found the girl in her little rose-garden, snipping off dead leaves and spent blossoms, and gathering fresh flowers for the Rectory table.

There be divers sorts of diplomacy, in social affairs as in matters political—the kind that sinuously burrows, mole-like, out of ken, and that which goes directly and remorselessly to the end in view. Knowing, or thinking he knew, the best way to approach the girl,—for no man ever really knows a woman, or can predict of a surety what she will do or say under a given set of conditions,—Madoc chose the more direct mode of attack, affecting for the nonce a bluff and business-like view of the delicate affair he was about to broach.

"Don't go in yet, my dear child; I want to talk to you on a very important subject."

So saying he relieved Janet of her basket and garden-shears, and led her to the identical rustic bench under the ancient, spreading yew-tree where he and Lady Callidia had sat only a few days before.

"To talk to me?" inquired Janet in genuine surprise, for Ralph Madoc had the reputation of being a crusty and satirical old misanthrope.

"Even so," was the debonair answer. "If I were thirty or even twenty years younger, I might be saying what I am going to say on my own account; as it is, I am come on behalf of another man."

He paused, partly to note the effect of his words, partly to give the girl time to digest them. She looked at him, with parted lips, in mute wonder, her color coming and going, the bodice of her gown rising and falling tremulously.

"On behalf of another man?" she again repeated questioningly.

"Just what I said, my dear,—on behalf of another man,—a faint-hearted man, who would be the first to admit that he does not deserve so fair a lady, but who nevertheless loves you dearly."

This was a monstrous piece of romancing on Ralph Madoc's part, but it was perhaps necessary to his case. Janet Persis drew a little farther away from her elderly visitor and gazed at him with half-frightened eyes, as though she questioned his sanity.

"Oh, I know the proceeding is somewhat unusual in these degenerate days," said Madoc, with a quizzical smile; "but it is not without precedent. And in thus pleading the cause of my young friend I am happy to tell you that I have the cordial approval of his mother."

"His mother! What on earth are you talking about, Mr. Madoc?" queried Janet, more perplexed than ever. He ignored the interruption and went on:

"And as the friend of both families, I may say that the proposal strikes me as a very happy one for all concerned."

"Proposal!" again ejaculated Janet under her breath. She was getting provoked. Then aloud: "I don't want to be rude, Mr. Madoc, but if you do not stop speaking like the Sphinx, I shall go indoors," half rising as if to put her threat into execution.

"Sit down, my dear, sit down," returned the old conspirator with complete composure; "the Sphinx was a lady, you know. I have not yet told you my errand."

Janet complied, as much from feminine curiosity to hear what was coming, as because she had no wish to affront a parishioner of her father's and an old crony to boot. Concluding that he had played his fish long enough, Madoc now struck.

"In brief, Miss Janet, I am the honored bearer of an offer of marriage from Sir Tristan Vergil, your old friend and playmate, who lays himself, his title, and all that he possesses at your feet." He leaned back to watch the effect of his words.

Janet Persis flushed rosy red, then paled to ivory whiteness.

"You are not joking, Mr. Madoc?—you could not be so cruel!" she panted.

"I am speaking in the person and as the envoy of the master of Midwood," he replied gravely, with a ceremonious inclination of the head.

"Why didn't he come himself?" she demanded quickly, voicing the first thought of most women under the circumstances.

"Pure bashfulness on his part, I assure you, my dear child. He has been longing to speak to you these many months—at least, so I understand. You know how reticent and retiring he is—how peculiar, I may say. But I infer from Lady Callidia that he has confided his fond hopes to her, and she honored me by taking me into her confidence and asking my advice. Naturally, I approved of the match—nothing could be better for all concerned; Sir Tristan has wealth, position, and an honored name; you are his equal in birth and breeding, and you must allow me to add that no fairer lady than yourself ever ruled or ever will rule over Midwood."

Janet waved these compliments aside, as she could well afford to do.

"It is very strange," she mused, regarding Ralph Madoc with a penetrating gaze, as though she would read his real thoughts. "I never heard of such a thing—to send another man on such an errand!"

"Never heard of such a thing? Why, you should know your Long-fellow better than that," was the chuckling response. "What about Miles Standish, John Alden, and Priscilla? Only, pray remember that I am a loyal envoy, and no supplanter. For you must understand, my dear Janet, that I am here simply to spy out the land. If I can report that the queen of the country is kindly disposed, Sir Tristan will come himself, never fear! It was only because he dreaded a rebuff that I was sent on ahead." This was said half jocularly and smilingly to reassure the girl.

"And what says Lady Vergil?" inquired Janet.

"Delighted at the idea—simply delighted!" was the enthusiastic reply. "'Tell Janet I will welcome her as my daughter.' Those were her very words."

"She knows me better than to suppose I would enter her family on any other footing," returned Janet proudly.

"Precisely," assented Ralph Madoc.

Janet Persis, with half-averted face, turned her thoughts inward. This queer proposal was not without its attractive side. As Lady Vergil she could not only fulfil her own ambitions, but she could play the part of a near-by Lady Bountiful to the brothers and sisters at the Rectory. What might she not do for the girls and the boys at school? Then there leaped into mind the thought of Eustace Derrick, and the blood surged riotously from heart to face and forehead and back again. Poor Eustace! she sighed inwardly—and poor Janet! She turned again to Ralph Madoc, who, watching her narrowly, deemed the victory already achieved.

"You place me in a most embarrassing position, Mr. Madoc," she said quietly and with dignity, but flushing furiously. "As Sir Tris-

tan's representative I ought perhaps to say to you what I should say to him were he here, in order that there may be no misapprehension. I—I—do not love him."

"Tut, tut!" exclaimed Madoc. "That will come in time, you know. It isn't as if you were strangers—you were boy and girl together. He's a fine fellow—a little reserved and absent, now and then, but his heart is in the right place, and with a wife at his side such as you will make, he'll come out of his shell and take his proper place in the county."

Beyond the fact, patent to everybody, that Sir Tristan had for years been moody and a recluse from society, the girl knew little or nothing of his malady, so she took Ralph Madoc's word for granted—or, rather, she paid little attention to that particular matter, her mind being occupied with other and perhaps to her more important aspects of the new life thus suddenly proffered for her acceptance.

"I don't know what to say," she responded, slowly and doubtfully, at length.

"There is no need to commit yourself at once," returned Ralph Madoc suavely. "May I report that you will receive Sir Tristan when he calls?"

"Yes, you may go that far," Janet answered, after an instant's thought. "I may tell my father—and mamma, I suppose?"

"By all means. And yet—er—er—if I might advise, I would say nothing to them unless you decide to give Sir Tristan a favorable answer." And with these words the crafty envoy bowed himself away.

Janet Persis spent the night wrestling,—not in prayer, but with her rebellious heart,—striving in vain to smother and stifle the passionate love for Eustace Derrick which burned fiercer than ever now that she stood face to face with the fact that by her own act she might raise an impassable barrier between them. She arose at daybreak, plunged her face and smarting eyes in limpid water, dressed hurriedly, and stole out for a long walk.

When she returned it was nearly time for the eight-o'clock breakfast. Nevertheless, she went straight to the Rector's study.

Ralph Madoc's cause was won, and between them he and Lady Vergil had unwittingly scattered broadcast a fine sowing of dragon's teeth.

VII.

TRAGEDY and comedy, pathos and bathos, are sometimes separated by nothing stouter than a faintly tangible line. Sir Tristan's all-too-brief courting of Janet Persis would have been comic but for the tragic possibilities ever lurking in the background; while the pathetic aspect of a hearty young Englishman allowing his mother to go a-wooing on his behalf was well-nigh lost in the sheer bathos of the situation.

On her part, it must be confessed that Lady Callidia went about her strange task right heroically, not to say manfully. Never had she evinced so much clever tact and feminine diplomacy as on and up to the fateful afternoon when she captured Tristan and drove him over to the Rectory in her own basket-phaeton. The travails and divagations of the Lammles with Young Fledgeby and little Georgiana Podsnap were no whit lighter by comparison.

By dint of alternate maternal coaxing and bullying Tristan had been persuaded first into listening to, and then into entertaining the idea of getting married. In this part of the game Ralph Madoc proved an able second in command, clapping him on the back, and telling him jovially that he would never be really and truly the master of Midwood until he had taken unto himself a wife; but as Ralph sapiently acknowledged in private,—

"It's one thing to get him up to the fence, and quite another to make him take the jump!"

"Leave that to me," was Lady Callidia's quietly confident rejoinder. "The girl's no fool, and if she wants to be mistress of Midwood,—as you tell me you think she does,—she'll not be too particular about the preliminaries."

"Can you get him to actually propose to her, do you think?" inquired Madoc, who had his own serious doubts on the matter.

"I'll make him!" was her Ladyship's grim response.

And she did. Leaving Sir Tristan in the Rectory garden, she went in alone to plead with Janet. Taking the girl's hands in hers after the customary greetings, she kissed her affectionately on both cheeks, murmuring:

"I have always longed for a dear daughter of my own, Janet. Be kind to my poor boy for his mother's sake! Give him what he asks and make us both happy! I'll send him to you now." And nodding cheerfully she went out to summon Tristan.

She found that young gentleman moodily engaged in chewing a straw and stolidly flicking flies from the horse's back.

"Janet is waiting for you in the parlor, dear. I have made the way as easy for you as a mother could. Remember what you are to say. I will join you as quickly as I can," she whispered hurriedly as she impatiently plucked the straw from his lips and almost whisked him out of the phaeton and up the steps.

Reluctantly and in hang-dog fashion he slouched inside and blundered in at the first open door. Janet Persis was standing by a little side table ostensibly arranging some photographs. She looked up as Tristan sheepishly entered, her face rosy with color, and in response to his off-hand, half-mumbled, "How do, Jen?" she came forward, extending her hand. He held his hat in his right hand, and in the en-

deavor to effect a quick passage of it to his left managed to drop first the hat and then his gloves. They both stooped, he to pick up one and Janet the other, with the result that their heads almost came together; the contretemps provoked a ripple of gurgling laughter from the girl, hearing which Lady Callidia outside augured that the queer courtship was progressing better than she had dared to hope.

The girl's composure restored, Sir Tristan plunged into his carefully rehearsed oration, like a school-boy who is afraid he will forget his lesson if he does not get it off his mind in a single volley. But the words of his set speech went clean out of his mind as he found his voice, and what he actually said was very different from what he had been told to say.

"Look here, Jen," he began brusquely; "the mater says I've got to get married, and I can't fancy anyone but you—don't remember that I ever did, for a fact. We know each other pretty well, Jen, so I don't see what's the use—er—of—er—— Oh, hang it all, Jen, the long and the short of what I want to say is, Will you marry me?"

He had worked himself into a profuse perspiration, and stood before her, nervously twirling his hat, the picture of awkward embarrassment.

This utterly bare and ludicrous proposal roused all the latent mirth in Janet Persis, and she had to turn away to conceal her incongruous merriment. But the voice of Tristan compelled her attention again.

"Don't tell me I've made a mess of it, Jen," he pleaded, like a big baby; "the mater will be in an awful wax if you don't say yes!"

As much to put an end to this altogether ridiculous interview as for any other reason, Janet pulled herself together and said demurely:

"You did it very nicely, Sir Tristan. I will be your wife. You may kiss me, if you like," offering her cheek, which the flustered Tristan managed to just brush with his lips, and then retreated backward in haste.

Lady Callidia filled the breach, like an old campaigner, by opportunely appearing at that instant, saying volubly:

"May I come in? I see you children have arrived at an understanding with each other, and I cannot tell you how happy you have made me! Kiss me, Janet dear, and you too, Tristan!" And, drawing them both to her, she joined their hands together, beaming affectionately upon them both, and calling them over and over again her dear son and daughter.

Her point gained, it was her cue to get the Baronet away before he could do any mischief, gracefully covering his retreat. So she said to Janet:

"You must come and visit me often, now, my dearest girl, else Tristan will be spending all his days here and I shall see nothing of

him." And thus keeping up a lively torrent of talk, promising to see the Reverend Henry Persis on the morrow, the phaeton was gained and mother and son drove away.

Left to herself, Janet Persis laughed hysterically, saying half aloud:

"He's worse than I thought! What manner of husband will such a lover make? He never even thought it worth while to tell me he loved me, or inquired whether I cared for him! Glad am I that he did not; the less pretence between us on that score the better!" And she sighed bitterly as she thought what an altogether different wooer was Eustace Derrick.

VIII.

HALF of Hartshire was bidden to the wedding, which was celebrated within a month, for, once Janet's consent had been obtained to Sir Tristan's shamefaced and clumsy proposal, Lady Vergil seemed surprisingly anxious to resign her rule and accept the rôle of dowager.

To Midwood, then, came all the county magnates from miles around, the guests including also Colonel Horace Ingram, Wyatt Wythe, Serena Carewe, and Julian Vergil—the latter invited by Lady Callidia in much the same spirit that a captive prince was used to grace the triumph of some Greek or Roman conqueror. Such a marriage, forced and loveless though it might be, mused Lady Vergil, was a trivial price to pay for the gloating satisfaction of showing the detested Julian how completely his hopes of the succession were dashed.

But to more than one person present the solemn ceremony and its attendant gayety resembled rather a heartless sacrifice to the Minotaur.

"It's too bad!" said Horace Ingram to Wyatt Wythe, "though, of course, I can't expect you to agree with me. But I hear that Lady Callidia and Ralph Madoc made the match between them, the old lady herself doing all the courting."

"Believe nothing that you hear and only half you see," chuckled the solicitor. "There are advantages on both sides, you must admit."

"I don't perceive them," grumbled Ingram, who could scarcely be considered a disinterested witness, for now that Janet Persis was lost to Eustace Derrick, the latter might transfer his allegiance to the supposedly willing Serena Carewe, in which case the gallant Colonel would be left out of the running altogether.

As for Julian Vergil, he put a good face on the matter and behaved very well. He knew just how it stood with his cousin, Sir Tristan, and thought that even now the odds were in favor of his dying without an heir. In which case, he remembered, rather ruefully, there would be two jointures chargeable on the property instead of one, which was annoying, to say the least.

Moreover, the heir-at-law, it was plain to be seen, and rather to Lady Callidia's chagrin, unmistakably proclaimed himself the devoted

admirer of Janet Persis—always within proper cousinly limits. He honestly, though covertly, of course, commiserated her fate in being condemned to marry such a yoke-fellow as Tristan. He took full advantage of the family privilege, and at every opportunity displayed his admiration of the girl and of her beauty. He would have been only too glad to win such a wife himself, Julian reflected, and had it not been too late would have set about the task of cutting out Sir Tristan, despite the handicap of possessing no title, for in the matter of mere money the junior branch of the Vergils could have bought up Midwood three times over and never felt the pinch.

"She cannot really love him," he thought, and he had insight enough to shrewdly penetrate the girl's real motive in thus sacrificing herself. Of the hidden romance—or tragedy, whichever you please—between Eustace and Janet he possessed not the slightest inkling.

As for Janet Persis, her woman's wit soon discovered how the land lay with Julian Vergil, and she experienced both pleasure and gratitude over his open admiration and friendship. But beyond this his homage aroused no other feelings—in putting aside her love for Eustace she told herself that her heart was dead to all such emotions in future. Nevertheless, she felt that in Julian Vergil she had found a loyal admirer and a gallant gentleman, despite the endless traducings of Lady Callidia. Only the latter seemed to resent the sudden mutual liking which sprung up between the hated Julian and her prospective daughter-in-law. She registered a mental vow that once Tristan was married, and the family and social obligations decently fulfilled, it would be many a long day before Julian Vergil was again invited to Midwood.

No one seemed to take poor Derrick into account. Lady Callidia broke the tidings of the engagement to him, and at first he was for leaving Midwood instantly. But this would not suit her Ladyship's book at all!

"Why, we shall need you more than ever!" she exclaimed. "You know Tristan cannot get along without you! Think of poor me, shut up all alone with the newly married pair when they return from their honeymoon! I shall be the 'odd man out' unless you consent to stay and keep me in countenance. I beg you will not think of leaving us—at least until after the wedding. I know Tristan expects you to be his best man."

But at this last straw Eustace absolutely rebelled. He would stay, but he begged to decline the proffered honor—which ultimately devolved upon Julian Vergil, who felt nearly as badly over the marriage as did Derrick. In consenting to remain at Midwood the latter roundly cursed himself for his weakness, yet, like a moth fluttering around the candle-flame, could not tear himself away from its seductive and destructive glare.

In a passionately stirring interview Janet Persis had confirmed Lady Vergil's news; bitterly, at first, did Eustace upbraid her, although he might have been prepared for something of the sort. In the end, the feminine will prevailed: she brought him around to her way of thinking, although it was but a half-sulky and petulant acquiescence. Yet she let him see clearly that in marrying Sir Tristan her heart would not follow her hand, and he solaced his jealous pain with that darling thought.

Is it not Stevenson who says somewhere that men and women are queer beasts? Recognize them or not, as we may, we are too often actuated by motives which, brought into the garish light of day, would cause the worst of us to recoil in horror from the damning self-revelation. Who shall aver that in the hearts of these two sorely tried souls there was not the hidden hope, unsuspected and unconfessed, that the new mistress of Midwood might soon be left a widow?

To a queer courtship succeeded a queerer wedding. True, everything was outwardly altogether decorous and conventional. The ceremony took place in the old church at high noon, the Reverend Henry Persis officiating at the sacrifice as chief priest, and was followed by a breakfast at Midwood. Through it all the master of Midwood comported himself with no breaches of etiquette. If he were vacant and vacuous, he looked his part to perfection, and the bridal couple made a very handsome appearance. Truth to tell, the groom had been thoroughly coached by Lady Callidia, and she cleverly avoided one dangerous rock by expressly stipulating that there should be no speech-making at the wedding breakfast.

Julian Vergil contrived some small merriment by asking the assembled guests to guess why marriage in general was always a failure. The answer, "Because the bride never gets the best man!" although it provoked a general laugh, had rather a sinister meaning for some of those present, and might have been relegated to the limbo of those unfortunate things which one would rather not have said. But upon the whole the ceremony and the subsequent festivities passed off very well.

In Tristan's peculiar condition of mind and body it would have been manifestly unwise to indulge in a wedding-trip. So it was arranged that the young Baronet and his bride should spend a few days at a little shooting-lodge on the other side of the county, about twenty miles from Midwood, which had been expressly fitted up and stocked with servants for their reception.

The carriage containing the bride and groom left the main entrance of Midwood amid a chorus of jest and laughter and the inevitable shower of rice and old shoes. But scarcely had they passed the gates than Tristan withdrew into his own corner, where he remained through-

out the drive, moodily silent, never noticing the newly made Lady Vergil by so much as a word, a look, or a caress.

Upon arriving at The Larches, after dark, he promptly disappeared within his own room, declining the refreshments prepared and completely ignoring his bride. Lady Janet's maid was the only person she saw that night and all the following nights of their honeymoon stay at the lodge.

And it was a disappointed, disillusioned, and indignant bride who returned to Midwood at the expiration of the allotted period of conventional retirement.

As for Sir Tristan, he seemed just as much a bachelor as though he had never walked down the church aisle with Janet Persis on his arm. Rarely had there been a benedict upon whom the ties of marriage sat so lightly.

IX.

If fire and tow are placed in juxtaposition something will happen—an old truism. Fire and tow were ready laid at Midwood.

There is no fury like that of a woman scorned, says the wise old playwright. Sir Tristan's treatment of his wife was worse than any mere angry or contemptuous flouting; it savored of complete indifference, which is infinitely more difficult to bear. True, he greeted her off-hand when they met face to face—which he took good care was seldom; at table he assiduously avoided her gaze, and never spoke to her unless she first addressed him. To the young Baronet, apparently, wedded life brought no new cares or obligations; he resumed his bachelor habits and went his ways as of old, Lady Janet being callously left to her own devices. She might have been a chance guest in his mother's house.

To say that she was highly incensed, and then in her turn coldly indifferent, is merely to note her outward manifestations of feeling. At first she was thoroughly miserable and unhappy, and bitterly repented the sale of herself. In these early days too she almost loathed the sight of her gilded cage and the wealth and luxury surrounding her on every hand, which but served to remind her of her bondage to a man she had almost come to hate.

But as the weeks rolled away these turbulent feelings subsided into a dull rebellion, and finally took the form of a philosophic determination to make the best of her lot and console herself as best she might. To this resolve she was materially helped by the uniform kindness of Lady Callidia; her own mother could not have been more solicitous or thoughtful. Lady Janet was deeply grateful, and she entreated the elder woman not to leave Midwood. Lady Callidia in all probability would have remained in any event, but it was much pleasanter to be asked to stay by the new mistress. Then Eustace Derrick talked of going.

"What for?" inquired Sir Tristan in dull surprise.

"Because I am not needed," was the quiet response. "As I have often said, you need a secretary about as much as a dog needs two tails."

"If havin' two tails makes me more comfortable, and I'm willin' to pay for the one extra, I don't see what difference it makes to you," returned Sir Tristan. "Ain't the shootin' good enough?" which was a surprisingly long speech for this unfortunate flower of chivalry.

"I'm too comfortable; that's the long and short of the matter," laughed Derrick. "I ought to be at work."

"Work all you want," growled Sir Tristan, filling his everlasting pipe and preparing to move towards the stables. "I don't take much of your time, do I?"

"That's just it," objected Eustace, "I don't earn my keep."

"Beastly rot!" was the Baronet's only rejoinder, flung over his shoulder as he slouched away.

So Derrick lingered. Lady Callidia, at least, was pleased, and made no secret of her satisfaction to Derrick himself.

"Midwood needs you—we all need you," she said soothingly, even caressingly.

That man was never born who does not like to be made much of and appreciated by his womenfolk, and Eustace Derrick was not superior to the common run of men in this respect.

In the early days of her wedded life his intercourse with Lady Janet was upon a rather constrained and ceremonious footing. He managed so that they met only at meals, and he really began work on a long-projected book, which afforded an excuse for keeping to his own room or to the library the better part of each day.

But by degrees this temporary barrier between them was broken down. Lady Callidia made frequent demands upon his presence in the evenings, and by degrees he and Lady Janet came to be on at least a friendly footing. Neither of them could have told just how it came about, but insensibly they drifted into their old relations. Strange to say, they were conscious of no special pains to conceal their feelings; there really seemed no occasion for subterfuge. Lady Callidia apparently saw all, yet observed nothing, and when Ralph Madoc took to dropping in to dinner or afterwards it became the custom for him and the dowager to pair off at chess or bezique, while Eustace and Lady Janet, at the other end of the shadowy drawing-room, lingered at the piano over their duets, or else chatted confidentially in a cosey corner. Sir Tristan never showed himself after dinner and was not always present at the chief meal. Of visitors there were very few, once the duty calls were paid, and the newly wedded couple went nowhere.

Fire and tow, of a surety. The situation was perhaps without an

exact parallel. On the one side, a wife who was no wife, neglected and scarcely noticed by her husband; on the other hand,—or rather at hand,—her former lover and still passionate adorer, to whom she had more than once plighted her troth, and whom she had solemnly assured that he, and he only, possessed the key to her heart.

What wonder, then, that the couple thus strangely thrown together drifted into a relationship nearer and dearer than mere housemates, being all the while covertly aided and abetted by the twin conspirators, Lady Callidia Vergil and Ralph Madoc?

A year passed, and the first anniversary of Sir Tristan's wedding came around. Almost at the same hour of the day in which he and his bride had walked arm in arm down the aisle of the old Norman church, the upper chambers at Midwood echoed to the lusty cries of a new-born man-child.

Midwood had an heir at last, and Lady Callidia was triumphantly radiant!

Sir Tristan heard the news stolidly and indifferently, and gazed blankly at the red-faced mite of humanity in the nurse's arms. But the church-bells rang merrily, and a telegram announcing the event was immediately dispatched to Julian Vergil—all by Lady Callidia's orders.

Verily, the dragon's teeth were beginning to sprout!

X.

THE peculiar case of Sir Tristan Vergil had puzzled all the alienists of the English metropolis. Various monographs had appeared from time to time in the medico-scientific journals discussing, under fictitious initials, his strange malady.

As a result there journeyed to Midwood one day, when the baby was about six months old, a noted specialist, no less than the great Samson Edwardes himself. Armed with the proper credentials to Lady Vergil, he was promptly welcomed as a guest. He wished to observe the subject—Sir Tristan—off his guard and on his native heath, but not in the avowed character of a medical expert. In fact, he represented himself as an enthusiastic sportsman, and being no mean hand behind a gun, he spent many days with the young Baronet in the coverts, banging away at the grouse and the pheasants.

Had the young master of Midwood suspected his real errand or his professional identity, doubtless Samson Edwardes would have been left to beat the preserves alone; but as it was, the young man took a violent fancy to his mother's guest, in his company behaving more naturally and with less reserve than among his own people.

Consequently Edwardes was able to study him and his moods under

fairer conditions than any of his predecessors. In less than a week he asked Lady Callidia for a private interview.

"You have something to tell me about my son?" she queried when they were alone.

The eminent practitioner bowed.

"Within the last few days I have enjoyed unusual facilities for observing him and his ways, and I have formed a certain conclusion. But before announcing my opinion I should like to ask you one question."

"By all means," assented her Ladyship sweetly.

"It is this: Can you recall any accident to Sir Tristan in his younger days, such as a fall from a servant's arms or a chance blow on the head?"

Lady Vergil put on her thinking-cap.

"To the best of my recollection," she responded at length, "there was never anything of the kind while he was at home here. A mother's memory is apt to be very accurate on such matters, Dr. Edwardes. If such a mishap had occurred, his dear father or I would have known of it, I am sure."

Samson Edwardes looked his disappointment, but went about on another tack.

"He was away at school for some length of time?"

"Yes, at Harrow from the time he was thirteen until shortly after his fifteenth birthday—rather more than two years in all."

"And it was during this school period that you first noticed a change?"

"When he was fifteen he came home at midsummer for the long vacation. We noticed that he was absent-minded and moody, and on seeking the reason found, as he said, that he had 'flunked' every examination. Shortly after there came a letter from the head-master saying that unless Tristan made up his deficiencies during the holidays he would be dismissed for failure in his studies."

"And what happened then? Did he give any reason for his poor scholarship?"

"No; he said that he had tried, but could not keep up with his 'shell.' His father thought that perhaps the school work was too hard, and, not wishing to mortify the lad, resolved to remove him and enter him anew at Marlborough. But the poor fellow could not even pass the entrance tests there. Then we tried home tutors, but they all gave him up as hopeless."

Edwardes was silent for a few moments; then he spoke.

"I have formed a theory, Lady Vergil, which may or may not be borne out by results. It is this: Sometime and somewhere during Sir Tristan's school-days he was probably struck on the head by a ball

or a cricket-bat, or he may have been kicked during a football scrimmage. As a result, there is, I believe, either a splinter of bone pressing on a part of the brain, or else a clot has formed, causing a lesion affecting certain of his faculties. A comparatively simple surgical operation will inform us whether my diagnosis is correct, but should the family consent and his be obtained it is my duty to point out that while I believe there would be a successful issue, resulting in his complete restoration to health, there is a possibility that he might succumb under the ordeal."

"Meaning that Tristan would die?" inquired Lady Callidia tremulously.

Samson Edwardes bowed.

"Can you manage him?" she inquired after some seconds of silence.

"I believe he would trust himself to me," said the other, "although I have not yet mentioned the matter to him."

"Lady Janet would have to be consulted," said Tristan's mother; "my consent would not be final, you know. And Mr. Derrick, his friend and secretary, ought to be told."

Samson Edwardes nodded his approval, but at the same time shot such a keen glance at her Ladyship that she flushed painfully under his scrutiny. How much could he know or suspect? she wondered guiltily. To cover her slight confusion she said hurriedly,—

"I will talk with my daughter, and you shall have our decision to-morrow, Dr. Edwardes."

The man of science rose, saying:

"I trust your decision will be an affirmative one, Lady Vergil. Apart from my professional interest in the case, I should be glad to see Sir Tristan restored to his manhood—and his rights."

With a bow he left the room, while Lady Callidia sank back into the seat from which she had risen, agitated and quaking in every nerve.

That very evening the dowager called her little cabinet around her and recounted to them—Lady Janet, Ralph Madoc, and Eustace Derrick—her strange interview with Samson Edwardes.

Each member of the trio heard the news with varying emotions. Ralph Madoc took snuff repeatedly and asked questions. Lady Janet sat with her hands in her lap, her fingers locking and unlocking nervously, gazing blankly at her mother-in-law, but saying never a word. Derrick paced up and down the library, pausing at intervals in his walk to note the replies to Madoc's inquiries.

When all was elicited there was an interval of blank silence, which none of them seemed disposed to break. However, it was Lady Callidia who spoke first.

"Well, what is to be done?" she inquired, looking around the group and eagerly scanning the face of each in turn.

From neither Ralph Madoc nor Lady Janet was there any response to her question. Doubtless the former thought it wiser not to meddle in what was, after all, a purely family affair until and unless his opinion was directly asked. As for Lady Janet, she seemed for once in her life too dazed or too frightened to speak. It was Eustace Derrick who stepped into the breach, though at what personal pain might be judged by the great beads of sweat which dotted his forehead. And was it merely by chance or by force of habit that he came and stood by Lady Janet's chair, resting his hand on the back of it as he spoke?

"I say that Tristan must have his chance—at whatever cost!"

At this Ralph Madoc took the cue. "If Edwardes is confident he can cure him—" he was beginning, when Janet interposed, addressing Lady Callidia,—

"Did you not say there was a possibility of a—a—fatal termination?" she almost whispered.

Lady Callidia moistened her lips and nodded in silence. Was it simply a coincidence that Lady Janet's chair creaked loudly under Derrick's grip just then?

"Oh, these doctors don't know it all," hastily put in Madoc, "and, as Eustace says, Tristan must have the benefit of the doubt; you would never forgive yourselves if you refused to let Edwardes make the attempt, at least."

"Of course not!" exclaimed Eustace. But at these simple words Lady Janet burst into a hysterical fit of tears and sobbing. It fell to the lot of Eustace to comfort her, and as he led her from the room, murmuring brokenly, "How could you!" the two elderly plotters looked at each other blankly. To Lady Callidia's murmured question,—

"Is it all for the best, do you think?" Ralph Madoc threw up his hands with a gesture of complete abdication of responsibility.

"There is no other course," he answered. "We must wait and be guided by events."

In three days Samson Edwardes took Sir Tristan away with him to his house in London, where he had an operating-room and a sanitarium. The patient was as docile as a baby, and as happily ignorant of the possible outcome of the experiment as a lamb led to the slaughter-pen.

As a matter of fact, the quartet left behind in Hartshire betrayed far greater evidences of outward and inward emotion, though each from a totally different standpoint. For them there ensued, for a period of ten days, a time of acute suspense, awaiting the news from Samson Edwardes, who had promised to wire the result at the earliest possible moment.

Would it be life, or would it be death? was the anxious query in more than one heart at Midwood. Either event would be fraught with untold and perhaps unnamable consequences.

But at length a messenger lad from the nearest station dashed up on his pony. Lady Callidia was in the hall before the footman had signed for the despatch, and as she hastily ripped the flimsy envelope with trembling fingers, Eustace Derrick stood by her side and read the momentous words:

"Operation completely successful. Only rest and quiet needed for entire recovery.

" EDWARDES."

Verily, there would be a new Sir Tristan at Midwood ere many days! reflected Eustace Derrick, and what would happen then?

XI.

It was Lady Callidia who journeyed to London to meet the convalescent the instant that Samson Edwardes gave the word that he might be moved and see his relatives.

Under ordinary circumstances this duty would have devolved upon Lady Janet, or at least she would have accompanied the elder woman. But, as was perhaps natural under the somewhat unnatural conditions, Tristan's wife was prostrated at the good news—and Eustace Derrick with her, but he in his man's way. So long as the issue was in doubt, the two were still on debatable ground; the best, or the worst, according to the point of view, could not fail to make a wonderful difference at Midwood; the situation there suggested a reversal of the old adage that while there is life there is hope.

The return of mother and son might be looked for at any hour, now that Sir Tristan was supposed to be thoroughly restored to his normal self.

What manner of husband was it that would come back to his ancestral halls? was the question which agitated the hearts of Eustace Derrick and Lady Janet. In mute misery and suspense did they see this query in each other's eyes—there was scant need of putting the thought into words. And since, like a naughty boy who throws a stone at a window and runs away, Ralph Madoc chose to absent himself at this critical juncture, there was literally no one to whom Derrick could turn for counsel, for all the county accepted the known facts as they appeared on the surface.

A man of different calibre might have solved the difficulty by bolting, but Eustace was not made of the stuff which deserts a woman in her time of need. Then, if ever, he thought, Lady Janet needed him, or, at least, his presence and his sympathy.

But in the hearts of these two prisoners of hope, victims of circumstance, there was neither regret nor remorse for what had happened. It was the uncertain future that gave them pause and caused their unnamed fears.

Lady Callidia was thoughtful enough to telegraph the exact hour of their arrival. By a supreme effort both Lady Janet and Eustace Derrick pulled themselves together and awaited Sir Tristan's homecoming with what fortitude and composure they could muster. From what was perhaps a mistaken and altogether quixotic chivalry the man had forborne to intrude himself upon the woman in the case ever since Lady Callidia's departure. Each had fought out alone the battle of silent misery.

However, when the crunch of wheels on gravel sounded upon the drive they were both ready in the hall to receive the travellers. As Sir Tristan stepped into the warm and well-lighted interior the secretary and the wife stood side by side, yet a little apart.

At a glance it was apparent that they had indeed to deal with a new Tristan.

His bearing had lost the old, slouching stoop; his blue eyes were bright and even masterful; his step firm and confident. He nodded good-humoredly to the assembled domestics,—the butler, the housekeeper, and a couple of footmen,—and advanced with outstretched hand to Eustace Derrick, whom he greeted cordially, palm to palm and with one hand on the other's shoulder.

"How are you, old man?" he exclaimed, with a shake for every word. Then, turning to Lady Janet, he passed one arm caressingly around her shrinking waist, while with the other he took her hand and raised it to his lips in half-ceremonious, half-affectionate salutation. Then, as he led her to the drawing-room and the heavy curtains fell to behind them, Lady Callidia and Derrick distinctly heard the words,—

"Forgive me, dear Janet, for all the worry and suffering I must have caused you."

Lady Callidia hurried to her room; she did not dare to look at Eustace.

It is characteristic of the high-bred men and women of any civilized race that they can pass through the grimmest ordeals, full of direst tragedy to heart or life, with apparent composure and with smiling eyes and lips, abating not one jot or tittle of the social convenances. And although Derrick would have faced a file of soldiers, his back against a blank wall, rather than go in to dinner that night, he dressed as usual, as did Lady Callidia and Lady Janet, and when they all met in the drawing-room no one would have supposed that a tornado of passion, suspense, and anxiety was torturing the hearts of at least

three of the party. If the young wife was feverishly brilliant as to eyes and complexion, it might be very properly assigned to her supposed happy reunion with her husband.

He, on his part, seemed serenely happy. He took the head of the table, where his fathers had been wont to sit before him, with a calm assumption of his rightful place; the incubus of the hateful dark days was thrown off as a chrysalis sheds its dun-colored membrane; to his mother he was deferentially courteous and affectionate; to Derrick his manner was that of a friend and comrade; Lady Janet, his wife, he regarded wistfully, drinking in her beauty with the respectful homage of a lover, and striving to anticipate her every wish.

The effect of all this upon the girl was painful to witness; her agitation at times was almost pitiful, and yet she held herself proudly and bravely in hand. Sir Tristan did his best to put her at complete ease, and when the ladies retired, pleading fatigue, he escorted them to the door, kissing his mother good-night and bowing courteously above Lady Janet's hand.

Left alone with Derrick, over their coffee and cigars, he at once dropped into the familiarly affectionate tone which such a man might be supposed to take towards the friend of his boyhood. Naturally, there was much to be said and a great deal to be taken for granted, but although the secretary felt like a cowardly supplanter, there was no hint in Tristan's manner of any feeling beside that of complete confidence and cordial friendship. Which, to a man like Eustace Derrick, was another source of inward disquiet and self-despising.

Only one remark escaped Sir Tristan concerning his relations with his wife, and that was dropped as the two men were about to part for the night. With a curious little laugh, like that of a shame-faced lover, he said,—

“It seems that I shall have to court Lady Janet all over again!”

XII.

To insure and advance the complete recovery of his patient, Samson Edwardes prescribed a winter spent abroad in some warm climate, and it was partly to arrange the details of such a trip that Sir Tristan had returned to Midwood.

The subject was broached almost immediately. His heart was set upon a voyage to the Mediterranean. He would charter a yacht, and they must all go—his mother, his wife, Eustace Derrick, the baby, and the nurse. Derrick pleaded hard to be left behind, but without avail; Lady Janet was afraid to offer any open opposition, yet the idea of being cooped and cabined in close quarters with the two men filled her with genuine horror and aversion.

But Tristan was good-humoredly and blindly insistent. It would

benefit them all, he said. They had been worried enough about him; now that he was himself again, he owed it to them all to recompense them in some way. So he telegraphed to Southampton, and succeeded in chartering just the sort of craft he desired—a fine, able, and well-found schooner of two hundred tons named the Osprey. And he hurried the preparations with such purpose that by the middle of November they were all on board and dropping down the Solent before a light northwesterly breeze.

The run down Channel and across the Bay was uneventful and remarkably pleasant for the time of year. But it was not a happy ship, so far as the cabins and the saloon were concerned. True to his word, Sir Tristan set himself to the task of wooing his wife anew, confessing to himself that he had never known her, and was most lover-like in his attentions. He seemed tacitly to date their married life from his return to Midwood, although he accepted the presence of the baby and his nurse as a matter of routine, and when he learned by accident that the child had not been christened he said quietly and masterfully,—

“We will call him Tristan, of course.”

But he never obtruded his presence, and had he and Lady Janet really been on the delectable border-land of matrimony no man could have been more chivalrously polite.

Under any other conditions Lady Janet must have been touched by his consideration, but as matters were she was troubled, mortified, and even frightened. She was no Messalina. For the time was undoubtedly at hand when one of two things must happen: Sir Tristan would demand his rights; denied them, he would question the why and the wherefore.

Lady Callidia saw the impending tempest, trembling with anxiety, yet powerless to interfere or avert. The doom must work itself out, she concluded with fatalistic resignation. But the tragic end was nearer than she divined.

Eustace Derrick felt as though the cheerful white-and-gold cabin of the yacht had underneath its floor a powder magazine to which the slow-burning fuse had already been applied.

The Osprey passed Gibraltar, and her bowsprit pointed due east. Malta was to be their first port of call. Day by day Lady Janet saw her fate drawing nearer and nearer; there was a light in Sir Tristan's eyes which no wife could misunderstand, and she was genuinely terrified, for at heart she was as pure as her little, helpless baby.

At dinner one evening—it was the fifteenth of December, a date she never forgot to her dying day—she slipped a little note to Derrick under cover of the damask cloth.

When he gained a chance to read it he found these hastily pencilled words,—

"I must see you and talk with you alone; be on deck about ten o'clock."

The night came on dark, moonless, and almost airless; evidently a change of weather was at hand. The Osprey had barely steerage way, and was under all plain sail. When Eustace emerged from the brilliantly lighted cabin it was like looking into the black depths of a coal-mine. But gradually he distinguished the familiar deck-fittings and made his way to the binnacle, where he found the sailing-master and the mate anxiously discussing the weather. The boat heaved sluggishly, sending ripples of phosphorescent light away from her sides at every roll.

Lighting a cigar, Derrick took his stand by the skylight, whence he could see all that went on in the saloon. Sir Tristan and his mother were playing cards; Lady Janet sat by, listlessly looking on.

Presently the elder woman arose and went to her state-room, and almost immediately Lady Janet did likewise. Tristan poked his head out of the companion-way, but, not seeing Derrick about, retreated and apparently retired also. The steward went around dimming the lamps, and the saloon was completely deserted.

On deck, Eustace kept his lonely tryst until he almost despaired of Lady Janet's appearance. But just as he had about decided to turn in her hooded and cloaked figure appeared, and she came noiselessly to his side. He led her forward a few paces until they were sheltered by the shadow of the mainmast and the great mainsail.

With a passionate sob and a half-articulate cry she flung herself into his arms, saying,—

"I cannot bear it any longer, Eustace; you must find some way to put an end to this hollow mockery!"

It was the first time he had clasped her in his arms in many weeks, and all the floodgates of his love and passion were unloosed. With burning kisses he covered her mouth, her eyes, and her hair, whispering endearing and reassuring words, and striving to assuage her distress.

He had scarcely put her from him, and his arm was still supporting her, when there was a quick step, a simultaneous flash of lightning from zenith to horizon, a tall figure loomed large out of the succeeding gloom, and the voice of Sir Tristan said:

"Is that you, Janet? Let me see you safe below; the captain thinks we are in for a bit of a blow, and you must be all snug before it comes."

So saying, in quiet and level tones, he passed his arm through hers and led her to the hood of the companion. Derrick stood rooted to the deck, the hot blood pumping furiously from heart to head. How much had Tristan seen or heard? How much could he know or suspect?

His guilty speculations were to have a speedy answer. Sir Tristan

quickly retraced his steps to where the other stood, although the ship was now alive with seamen springing about from halliards to sheets in the act of reducing sail. The wind was beginning to rise, coming in stronger puffs every minute, the Osprey already plunging viciously to the short, underrunning surges.

Sir Tristan came close to Eustace Derrick, advancing his face until the angry gleam of his eyes was plainly visible.

"You damned villain!" he hissed rather than spoke; "so you are nothing but a common poacher, after all!" and at the instant his strong and supple fingers closed around the other's throat.

Eustace strove to throw him off, but without avail, and in a fierce death-grip they writhed and twisted across the heaving and slanting deck. Unnoticed by either of the wrestling foes, there was a far-off wailing and moaning in the darkness overhead, rapidly increasing in pitch and intensity until it assumed the proportions of a screeching, sullen roar.

"Down for your lives!" shouted the skipper, savagely whirling the spokes of the wheel to make the Osprey pay off. As she lay, the Levanter would strike her broadside on.

But no warning cry served to allay the fury of the locked and panting figures that went silently staggering and struggling over the deck, hidden from the crew in the grim darkness, Sir Tristan endeavoring to drag Eustace Derrick to the low bulwarks and hurl him over the side.

With shrill scream and hellish roar the squall smote the yacht, laying her tall masts almost parallel to the waves.

A jagged bolt of lightning tore the heavens in twain, and by its ghastly blue glare, as the Osprey righted and gathered headway, the horrified seamen saw the bodies of their owner and his guest, clasped in a death-grip, disappear astern.

XIII.

"So JULIAN VERGIL is still the heir-at-law?" inquired Horace Ingram.

"Exactly—with this difference: there is now only the life of a puling infant between him and the title. It's what the underwriters at Lloyds would call a pretty good risk, I fancy," returned Ralph Madoc with one of his cynical smiles.

The two men were seated in the smoking-room of a London club, each in a deep leather chair, with the inevitable small mahogany table and its liquid concomitants between them, blue spirals and wreaths of fragrant tobacco weaving fantastic patterns around their heads.

"It was a strange catastrophe," mused Ingram aloud, addressing the feathery ash of his cigar. If the remark were destined to draw out his companion, it was entirely successful.

"Pure fate, my dear fellow," replied Madoc, "and a beautiful example of the way our affairs are mismanaged for us by the powers that be. Why, just think of it! There was Sir Tristan, newly restored to life, as you may say, with everything worth living for,—rank, wealth, a beautiful and loving wife, and an infant son and heir,—when he is snatched away and his career ended by an adverse puff of wind!"

"How did it happen?" queried the other.

"No one knows, nor ever will know, exactly. Lady Janet and the dowager had retired for the night; it is supposed that Tristan and Derrick went on deck for a before-bedtime smoke. A storm had been threatening all the evening, but when it did come it proved to be what they call a 'Levanter,' and the yacht was knocked over at the first out-fly. The skipper and the crew had their hands full looking after the boat, and all they can tell about the tragedy is that in the glare of the lightning they saw our friends struggling together in the water. When they got the Osprey under control after the squall, and a boat was lowered, both had disappeared. Whether one of them fell or was swept overboard—and which one—and the other plunged after him will never be known."

"That seems the only reasonable supposition. They were devoted to each other—every one knew that," remarked Ingram.

Madoc's sole response was an assenting wave of the hand. His version was the conventional one, accepted as being in accordance with the few tangible facts known by the world at large. As he could truthfully say, neither Lady Janet nor Lady Callidia knew any different, whatever they or he might privately suspect. And so the tragedy of the Osprey went down into history as simply "another fatal yachting accident."

"How do the ladies bear up?" Ingram inquired.

"Much as you would expect," was the reply. "They were both greatly prostrated, of course, but since their return to Midwood they are feeling more resigned, although one of them lost a son, the other a husband, and both of them a friend. All their hopes now are centred on the boy—especially Lady Callidia's. If anything happens to Master Tristan she will be in despair, after all her trouble in arranging the marriage. You know how she dislikes Julian Vergil."

Ingram nodded assent. "I never fancied that particular match," he went on, "but Vergil's recovery from his operation put a very different face on the matter, you know."

"All in all, it was the best thing that ever happened," said Madoc as he rose to go out, "and it was a thousand pities that Vergil did not live to enjoy his new-found health and happiness."

During the foregoing colloquy the former, but now reformed, conspirator had covertly but none the less closely watched the younger

man, and was greatly relieved to find that the wide-awake Colonel Ingram accepted his convenient and decorous accounting for past tragic events and present new conditions without question. Indeed might the dead past be permitted to bury its dead—decently and as completely as the surges of the Mediterranean had closed over the bodies of the two victims of his and Lady Callidia's machinations.

"I may be in the neighborhood of Midwood shortly," said Ingram in parting. "Would it be premature for me to call there, do you think?"

"Not at all," returned Madoc. "The ladies, I am sure, will appreciate your kindly solicitude."

"I can guess what takes you near Midwood, my boy," the old cynic chuckled to himself as he walked briskly up Pall-Mall. "It's an ill wind that blows nobody any good. I don't think Miss Carewe need wear the willow for Eustace Derrick any longer than she chooses."

It was even as Madoc shrewdly surmised. Horace Ingram had not been blind to the possibility that Miss Carewe's rejection of his suit might have been due to what Sam Weller called "a priory 'tachment," but gallantly and courteously forebore to put the question. Convention to the contrary, good women—lovely women, gentle women—have been known to bestow their affections unasked, and Serena Carewe had been in very good company while so doing. How deeply her affection had been centred on Eustace Derrick, Colonel Ingram had no means of knowing, nor whether there had ever been an open avowal on the man's part. But he thought it very likely that, being in no position to marry, Derrick had refrained from pressing his cause in earnest, although there might well have been a mutual understanding.

In this, of course, the honest and straightforward soldier was all out of his reckoning; we who are behind the scenes know better how it was with Eustace Derrick.

But now that his rival—if he had ever been such—was out of the way, there was no reason under heaven why Horace Ingram should not have another innings. There could be no harm in calling on Miss Carewe while he was in the neighborhood, for she dwelt only a few miles from Midwood.

And no one could wish less than God-speed to so gallant and single-hearted a wooer.

XIV.

A DAY or two after his arrival in Hartshire, having first made sure of his footing with Serena Carewe, and as a result of his reception in that quarter seeing no reason to despair,—quite the contrary, in fact,—Colonel Ingram rode over to Midwood.

To his surprise he met with unmistakable signs of disorder and dismay at the very threshold. A mounted groom passed him on the

drive, riding "hell to leather," and to his inquiries the somewhat dishevelled and disordered footman at the door made answer in husky tones:

"Yessir, th' ladies is at 'ome, but I himagine they're not receivin' t'd'y, sir. Everythink at sixes an' sevens; but I'll hannounce yer, sir," ceremoniously taking the Colonel's pasteboard on a silver salver, his padded legs forthwith disappearing unsteadily up the broad staircase. Returning he delivered himself to the following effect, his voice huskier, his red face knobbier and redder than ever,—

"Lady C'lidia pr'sents 'er complim'nts an' arsk's Colonel Ingram to wait; she'll be down immejit."

Much mystified,—for Ingram was too good a disciplinarian to question a domestic, especially when he of the opulent calves gave every evidence of having "taken something" to drown a real or an imaginary grief,—the visitor was fain to wait for Lady Callidia herself.

When she came into the morning-room, dressed in her heavy crape, her step was as nervously agile as ever, but she carried a moist and bedraggled handkerchief in her hand, and her alert and usually vivacious features showed indubitable signs of recent tears. Time, as we know, had dealt kindly by the still youthful dowager, and her iron will had carried her triumphantly through the manœuvres and the dire catastrophe of the last two or three years. But now she seemed and was really greatly distressed and deeply moved. In her present extremity the sight of the honest, manly features of Horace Ingram was exceedingly grateful.

"So kind and thoughtful of you to call," she said brokenly as he advanced to meet her and bent in his courtly way over the little hand, soft as velvet, but implacable as steel, which trembled in his warm grasp.

"I didn't know you were in trouble, really. What is it?" he inquired.

"Why, haven't you heard? It's about poor little Tristan! He's dreadfully ill—malignant diphtheria. I hope you're not afraid of contagion"—making as though she would move away from him, but desisting at his reassuring touch and look. "The local doctors have given him up, and I have just telegraphed to London for Samson Edwardes. But I fear it's too late, too late! He was my only hope, and now that is to be taken from me! It is cruel, very cruel!"

And the self-reliant Lady Callidia abandoned herself to a storm of angry weeping; not the soft sobbings and sighings of a grief-stricken mother-heart, but the choking and scalding tears of thwarted hopes and outraged ambitions.

"Is it so bad as that?" ventured Ingram gravely. Like most men,

he was abashed and embarrassed at the sight of a woman crying, and looked at Lady Callidia helpless as a moon-calf.

"It could not be worse!" she exclaimed, almost vindictively, he thought. "If he is taken from us there is nothing between Julian Vergil and the succession, and Janet and I will be turned out of Midwood. To think of it, after all I have done—*after all!*" She almost whispered the last words as she sat rocking her slight form to and fro in an agony of spirit pitiable to witness.

Ingram was at a loss what to reply. He knew how Lady Callidia abhorred Julian Vergil and all his works, but, with an Englishman's reverence for the established order of things, he did not share her biassed views. With Sir Tristan dead,—by the act of God, as it seemed,—if the infant heir were to be taken too, it was only right that Julian, being next in the male line, should succeed to the title and estates; that was a good old English custom and well worthy of observance. He could not help noting, also, that Lady Callidia's grief at the possible death of the boy seemed overshadowed by her aversion to Julian and her rebellion at the advantage which it meant to him. Not a word had she said about the child's mother and her sorrow. The one insistent note running through all her lamentations was the personal pronoun.

"How is Lady Janet?" inquired Ingram, lamely enough, as it seemed to him; he was heartily wishing himself out of the house.

"Well in body, thank you, but dreadfully cut up, of course," was the hasty reply, as though the child's mother were of slight account. And then, reverting to her own selfish and narrow outlook, she exclaimed:

"There must be a curse upon Midwood! First my own Tristan, and now the boy, the heir! Oh, I cannot bear it!" and she sprang from her chair writhing and twisting her hands and tearing at the decent and decorous crape collar round her neck as though it were choking her.

Ingram rose too, amazed and astonished at her Ladyship's outbreak.

"Is there anything I can do?" he faltered, taking refuge in the usual man's formula for such occasions, which might almost be termed the masculine litany in time of trouble.

"Nothing, nothing, thank you, Colonel Ingram, unless you can hasten Dr. Edwardes. But I fear it will be too late!" was the hopeless reply.

Glad to be released on any excuse, Ingram started for the door, saying, "I will wire for a special train if that will get him here any sooner," and made his escape.

Relieved of his presence, Lady Callidia gave full rein to her passionate chagrin, flinging herself face downward on an ottoman, and burying her face in its cushions that her cries of rage and baffled design might not be heard by the servants.

By degrees she became calmer, sat up, and patted and smoothed her disordered dress and hair into some semblance of propriety. Then she walked to the long French window, pressing her burning cheeks and forehead against the cold glass. Rousing herself at length, with an angry and petulant shake of the shoulders, she exclaimed aloud:

"And this is the end for which I imperilled my soul!" And then defiantly, as one of her Viking ancestors might have stormed at Odin of old: "Yes! and I would do as much again if anything would avail! But all is lost! There is a curse upon us!"

Horace Ingram was as good as his word. He whirled Samson Edwardes down to Midwood on a special train in less than three hours. But it was too late. The little Sir Tristan Vergil, the eleventh baronet, had choked to death in his mother's arms an hour previously.

XV.

ALMOST the initial act of Sir Julian Vergil, who in due course of law and of nature—greatly to the ill-concealed disgust of Lady Callidia—succeeded to the title and estates of Midwood as the twelfth baronet, was to prove her an arrant false prophet.

His first step after the legal formalities had been gone through was to absent himself for a year abroad, leaving behind him instructions that the ladies at Midwood were on no account to be disturbed.

To Lady Callidia he politely intimated that she might consider the old place her home unless she thought it possible to be happier elsewhere. In this he showed and experienced genuine feeling. "She hates me as the devil hates holy water," he said to Wyatt Wythe, "but she has buried three generations of her dead from there, and I will never turn her out."

"Her Ladyship is a determined person, Sir Julian," commented the shrewd old solicitor, scratching his ear with the feather-end of his pen, "and it is my duty to warn you that if you ever want to evict her she may give trouble."

Sir Julian laughed.

"'Lady Callidia Vergil is a very good hater,' is what I suppose you mean, Mr. Wythe. Thanks for your caution, but I'll not force her to move just yet."

"Well, Sir Julian, I hope you may never regret it," was Wyatt Wythe's pessimistic rejoinder.

But to Lady Janet, who received a similar invitation, Julian's manner and its matter were very differently conveyed. To her faint and faltering objections on the eve of his departure he rejoined:

"Midwood is yours as long as you care to make it your home. When I come back I hope to find you happy,—or at least happier,—and perhaps you'll be glad to welcome the wanderer."

"You are too kind, too good to me," she sobbed, pressing his hand. "If you knew all—but I cannot tell you; the past belongs to the dead!"

"You have had more than your fair share of trouble," said Julian, "and we must try and make your future a little brighter."

"It isn't that," she made answer, divining that he thought she referred to her loveless marriage. "My troubles were of my own seeking and making; I have been justly punished for my sin."

"Sin? What nonsense," he exclaimed, brusquely but not unkindly, resting his hand upon her drooping shoulder in cousinly familiarity. "Look here, Janet,"—they had become plain "Julian" and "Janet" to each other since the funeral of little Tristan,—"you are overwrought and unstrung. You see things in a false light. I've no doubt that poor Tristan, towards the last, was all that a husband should have been, but anyone could see that in the beginning you were simply sacrificed. I cannot believe you have anything with which to reproach yourself."

"You do not know—you never will know!" she rejoined hopelessly.

"Perhaps I am wiser than you think," he was beginning, when Lady Janet gasped in dismay and raised her eyes to his. But she saw in his glance only the frankest good-fellowship and affectionate solicitude.

"Do not worry about me," she said, giving him her hand in farewell, "for I am not worth it. Your kindness is more than I deserve or have any right to expect."

"You must let me be the judge of that," he answered with a genial smile, expressing fond and indulgent confidence, as he warmly pressed her hand in farewell.

"Poor girl!" mused Julian, "she must have thought a lot of Tristan; they say women always lavish their best affection on those of us men who are least capable of understanding or appreciating it."

Lady Janet, in her double mourning, looked more than beautiful as she bade him good-by. Affliction, remorse,—what you will,—had chastened and refined what once promised to be a too-exuberant beauty, and to the lonely Julian Vergil she seemed the very embodiment of girlish and yet womanly loveliness. He had always admired her, and had honestly envied his cousin at the period of what he then, in common with some others that we wot of, deemed a most unequal and one-sided marriage.

And so the image which he carried away with him into his purely voluntary exile was one upon which he dwelt with many a fond backward and forward glance.

Altogether it must be admitted that the new Baronet behaved very handsomely and most considerately. Few men would have done as much; no one could have done more. For once Lady Callidia's venomous tongue was stoppered; there was nobody to listen to her jeremiads

with Julian Vergil as a moral text, for Lady Janet would hear not a word in his disfavor. And in these latter days the thin veil of forbearance between these two women was nearly rent asunder. A look from the younger woman was enough to daunt the fiery spirit of the elder and send her cowering to her corner like a whipped spaniel.

But it may be admitted that Sir Julian possessed also an eye to the main chance. Tristan's marriage and death had saddled a second jointure upon the income of Midwood, never too large at the best of times. And although to the new incumbent money was no object, yet it were prudent to consider if perchance one of these charges might not eventually be extinguished—and in a very pleasant manner.

Hence, in that year of travel, in which he expatriated himself, partly for the good of two women, one of whom hated him with an undying hatred, and partly because, man-like, he could not bear the sight of their grief, it is not surprising that certain roseate visions of the future dwelt with him, sleeping and waking, afield and afloat, on the Swiss mountains or in the fiords of Norway—dreams in which the fair face of Lady Janet Vergil was an ever-present reality and an indispensable factor for their realization.

At length, with the yearly circling sun, Sir Julian Vergil came home; but not yet, he told himself, would he take up his abode at Midwood. Indeed, he had been a month in England before he made a call there—for to this pass had it come with him: that he would rather be welcomed for his own sake by one of its inmates than as the rightful owner.

XVI.

LADY JANET VERGIL and the dowager Lady Callidia sat facing each other in the morning-room at Midwood one day about six months after Julian's return. Their relations were, to say the least, strained; an open declaration of war might be expected at any moment.

"Am I to understand that Julian has definitely asked you to—er—continue to be Lady Vergil?" questioned the elder.

There was both covert sting and veiled sneer in the query, and the tone was purposely irritating.

"He has asked me to be his wife," the younger woman quietly answered.

"You love him, I suppose,—er—quite as much as you loved—my son, for instance?" this with drawling insolence.

A spasm of pain crossed the pale and beautiful face of Lady Janet, chastened by suffering.

"Why torture me!" she cried. "Have I not suffered enough already through your plotting and scheming?"

"Suffered!" The dowager well-nigh snorted at the word and almost bounced out of her seat. "What were your sufferings compared

to mine, I may be permitted to ask? My only son dead and gone, and a hated interloper filling his place! Suffering, indeed!"

"Mine was a double loss, remember, both son and—husband," replied Janet gently, repressing the hot and fiery retort that came leaping to her lips.

"Ah, yes; all very fine, no doubt. And now you propose to console yourself with making sure of the title plus a rich husband."

There is no vulgarity equal in cutting brutality to that of a well-bred woman in a temper.

"But let me tell you this, Madam," continued the infuriated old woman: "Either you tell Julian the truth,—the whole truth, mind you,—or I will! Then we'll see if he be so set on marrying his cousin's widow!"

In all this Lady Callidia evinced nothing but the meanest malice. By all womanly considerations Janet Vergil was entitled to her forbearance. Yet the dowager's hatred of Julian Vergil was so insensate and so overmastering that she would stick at nothing to thwart him or plant a thorn in his happiness.

But this last threat snapped the warp and woof of Lady Janet's patience, worn threadbare during many long months of nagging. She rose, and stood towering in her tall beauty above the slight form of the elder woman. Moreover, the menace had precisely the opposite effect from that intended. She had fully resolved to refuse Julian's offer; but, conscious of her power over him, and being put upon her defence by Lady Callidia, she determined to put that power to the test. In an instant her resolution was taken. She would make confession first; and then, if he chose to take her with his eyes open, she would marry him! In that moment Lady Callidia quailed before the insurgent spirit she had invoked.

"I myself will tell him—face to face!" Janet exclaimed.

"You will not dare!" faltered the other under her breath.

"We will see. You shall read the statement I will write; you shall give it him with your own hands, and he shall decide in your presence!" So saying she swept proudly towards the door.

Lady Callidia sank limply into her seat. She had indeed raised a spectre which she could not control. Ere Lady Janet reached the portal she tremblingly called to her to return.

"Don't mind what I said, Janet; I was unreasonable—angry—insane!"

Lady Janet stood, statuesque, by the heavy curtained doorway, a fold of the lifted drapery in one hand.

"It is too late now," she answered in cool and level tones. "I shall tell Julian; it is his right,—it will explain many things,—and it will be my expiation!"

XVII.

WHEN Julian Vergil, after waiting fully as long as convention and decency demanded, asked Lady Janet to marry him, changing her condition but not her name, he looked for no serious opposition on her part. The triune deities—Affection, Prudence, and Sensibility, to say nothing of Sentiment—might be regarded as being on the side of such a match.

Of his own ardent feelings there could be no question; in the interval of waiting which he thought etiquette called for, his passion for the beautiful widow had waxed continually. That the marriage would be an advantageous one for her no common-sense person, man or woman, could deny. He believed that she liked him; he hoped that she loved him, or could learn to do so.

It was with both surprise and some little pique, then, that he met with a gentle but none the less positive refusal.

"It is out of the question, Julian," she had said. "There are reasons of which you know nothing why such a thing could not—must not—be. Believe me, I respect you too much. I cannot be your wife."

Sir Julian looked at her in genuine and unaffected surprise. Taking her hand, he led her to a seat, saying:

"You are talking in riddles, Janet. Is it Lady Callidia's opposition you fear? I know she dislikes me, and why, but she must not be allowed to mar our mutual happiness. Unless I am mistaken, you were once sacrificed to further her insensate ambitions and prejudices."

"It is I myself who would wreck your future, Julian," she made answer. "There has been that in my life which would make you hate me if you but knew."

"Tell me, dearest," he said coaxingly. "I do not wish to force your confidence, but for a long time I have felt that you were morbid about something that happened between you and poor Tristan—doubtless a mere triviality which you have nursed and magnified out of all proportion to its real importance.

She shuddered and shrank from him, shaking her head in negation.

"I cannot tell you, Julian. If it were the simple little matter you imagine, I might do so. But my guilty—nay, my shameful—secret concerns the dead equally with myself. We may not speak ill of them, you know. You would despise me if you heard the truth. Do not make me forfeit your respect and esteem."

"That you would always have, Janet, and my love also," earnestly answered Julian, "no matter what you told me."

She shook her head in quiet negation.

"But I tell you yes," he asseverated with masculine and masterful authority. "You are making a mountain out of some despicable little molehill."

She caught at the word.

"Despicable!" she repeated under her breath, and covered her face with her hands for a moment; then, speaking half to herself, she said aloud:

"And yet I was driven to it! Would any woman, placed as I was, have acted differently, I wonder?"

"I'll wager not, whatever it is you are fretting about," exclaimed Sir Julian jauntily. His cheerful faith in this woman whom he loved was sublime, although for a moment his serenity had been dashed by her persistence in these gloomy self-accusations—but only for an instant.

"I'll stake my life upon your truth and constancy!" he exclaimed.

"That alone will not absolve me—now," Janet returned mournfully, "but I thank you for your confidence."

He took her unresisting hand in his, fondling and patting it with a lover's soothing insistence.

"Now, see here, Janet," he went on, determined not to be balked of his prize by any mere idle whim; "this is all moonshine and false delicacy, and I do not propose to allow you to ruin your own life—and mine—by any raking over the dead ashes of the past. Let that rest. What has been done cannot be undone. Whatever the old mischance that is troubling you now, I am convinced that you must have acted for the best. Keep your secret if you choose to call it such, but put it away like so much old lumber. I will not take your answer in your present mood. Think it over, reflect upon the consequences to both of us, and give me your decision a week hence."

And as if loth to give her a chance to argue further, or to say him nay then and there, he touched his lips to her forehead and left her without further speech.

Alone, she thought over the full significance of his words. Little did Julian realize, she reflected, how they might be construed so as to palliate and even condone the past. If he had been retained as her special pleader he could not have made a more subtle argument. But if he should ever come to know the truth, would he be so complaisant? Would any man born of woman?

True it was that the hateful and hated past was buried beyond recall. Why should she be barred from all future peace because of one false step? Had she not been the sport of circumstances—the plaything and pawn of another's ambitions? Should she take Julian at his word? Would she not ever after despise herself for the heartless deception of a good and true man? Could any real and lasting good result from a union reared upon a fabric of lies?

Every woman desires to be sought for her own sake by some man; it is her right and her destiny to be protected and sheltered behind the

walls of affectionate wedlock. Did she love Julian Vergil? she asked herself. Not, perhaps, with the passionate regard that might have been his once upon a time; but she certainly did respect and admire him. Then how could she stoop to deceive him—what excuse could there be?

Thus torn betwixt duty and inclination, Janet passed the week of days between the afternoon of Julian's declaration and that upon which he had promised to come for his answer. Up to the very morning of the seventh day she had come to no abiding decision, and the crisis-compelling factor was the bitter and taunting tongue of Lady Callidia, who thus again defeated her own ends.

With a self-abasement that was almost heroic, Janet determined to risk all upon a single cast of the dice. Sir Julian should know the truth. With him then would rest the decision as to their future. Once arrived at this resolve, a strange calm took possession of her, akin to that which some tempest-tossed devotee of passion must experience when she has bidden farewell to the world behind the shelter of a convent gate, casting all her burden of woe at the foot of the Cross.

After leaving Lady Callidia she went straightway to her own chamber and wrote that which, she confidently expected, would send Sir Julian Vergil from her side forever. When it was finished she herself took it to the implacable old intrigante who had been the main cause of her undoing, and waited while she read the incriminating paper. Aghast at the consequences of her own hateful threat, Lady Callidia exclaimed:

"Janet, dear, you will not do this? Forgive my cruel and hasty words. I am a horrid, disappointed, and lonely old woman, Janet, but I cannot allow you to humble yourself like this!"

Lady Janet turned away with a gesture of supreme weariness and impatience.

"Julian is coming for his answer at four o'clock. There it is; and you shall place it in his hands! I am resolved upon this course, and I wish you to be present at the interview. Then you will have nothing to taunt me with in future."

So saying she went out, while with a groan of anguish Lady Callidia collapsed into an inanimate heap on the floor.

XVIII.

PRECISELY at the appointed hour upon this eventful day Sir Julian Vergil was announced and was ushered into the old oak-ribbed library, the scene of many plottings, where he had held his momentous interview with Janet a week earlier, and where she was already awaiting him.

The dusk of an English autumn was already descending out-of-

doors; the library at Midwood was pierced by a single oriel north window, so that within there was scarcely more than that half-light termed "blindman's holiday." Lady Janet had expressly refrained from calling for lamp or candles, and the only artificial illumination came from the cosy blaze of a log fire on the capacious old hearthstone.

Sir Julian came towards her, his face and his manner full of ardent expectation. He would have taken her in his arms, for, loving her as he did, his man's nature found it hard to understand how this woman could help loving him in return. But she held him away from her by a simple gesture.

Still, the bluff good-humor of the man was not to be put out by even this seeming coldness—or coyness—he was not sure which.

"Well, Janet," he began without ado, "you know what I am here for, dear. Have you thought over what I said? Will you take me for better or worse? Remember, you can make me the happiest or the most miserable of men, Janet, so be merciful."

"I will be merciful, Julian," she responded, "but if I seem cruel, it is in order to be kind."

She paused as if to gather fortitude and strength for her next words, and then, coming nearer to him, putting her clasped hands on his shoulder and lifting her glorious eyes to his, shining even in the twilight, she went on:

"I told you that the past held a dark and disgraceful secret that would infallibly, as I believe, part us and kill your love for me. I could not bring myself to marry you keeping you in ignorance; neither can I persuade myself to acquaint you in words, face to face, what that secret is. Lady Callidia threatened to tell you if I did not; so, to forestall her menace, I have committed to paper the whole pitiful story. She will be here in a moment and will give you my confession, for I insisted upon her being present when you received it. After you have read what is written there I think you will thank me for saving you from myself."

For an instant again—yet only for an instant—did the import of her words raise a wavering suspicion in Julian Vergil's mind. But again did his faith in the fealty and the intrinsic nobility of the woman triumph over his doubts.

"Still harping on that same old string?" he laughed. "Why, Janet," you cannot frighten me with a lot of sick fancies. I'll wager that old beldame upstairs is at the bottom of it all. I don't care a rotten apple for your 'confession,' as you call it! I ask you again, Janet, in all seriousness and with all the strength of my manhood's love, to be my wife!"

"Wait!" she said, holding up a monitory finger.

At that moment Lady Callidia half glided, half tottered, into the room, holding closely to her side a folded paper. She sank into the

nearest chair, looking with appealing and timorous gaze first at Janet and then at Julian. The former was the first to speak.

"Lady Vergil, will you give Julian the paper which you hold, assuring him that you know its contents and can vouch for their truth?"

For answer the elder woman clutched the paper more closely. Her thin and bloodless lips moved convulsively, but no sound came therefrom. Her reluctance to part with the document was most evident.

"Pray do not trouble yourself, Lady Vergil," Julian interposed. "Really, I don't care a fig about the paper. Janet here has got a notion in her pretty head that there is something I ought to know, but if it will cause you or her a moment's pain or embarrassment I would rather remain in blissful ignorance."

With swift steps Janet crossed the room, almost snatched the folded paper from the grasp of Lady Callidia, and handed it to Julian.

"Read it!" she exclaimed; "you must—I insist!"

Julian took the document very gingerly and eyed it curiously for a moment, turning it over and over, but never so much as essaying to open it. Both women eyed him breathlessly, in dread suspense. He looked at one and the other, but his gaze dwelt longest and most longingly on Lady Janet. "How she loves me!" was his inward thought, his heart leaping in exultation. At length he spoke, deliberately and coolly:

"There's an old saying," he said, "that you may lead a horse to water, but you cannot make him drink. I don't want to read this thing, whatever its contents may be, and I will not. That for your 'confession,' as you call it, Lady Janet Vergil!" So saying he tore the paper into fragments, cast them upon the burning logs, and watched until, in glowing tinder shot with sparks, they went floating up the wide chimney.

Then, and not till then, he turned towards the woman most concerned and said, in tones tremulous with love and adoration,—

"For the third time, Lady Janet, I ask you to be my wife!"

She could withstand him and his sublime faith no longer. With an inarticulate cry she flung herself into his arms, while Lady Callidia, baffled and beaten, crept silently from the room.

PREMONITIONS

BY RICHARD KIRK

LIKE cherry-blossoms fell the snow;
And in the air I seem'd to hear,
Faint in the distance,—faint but clear,—
Stirrings of scented things below.

SOME ROMAN CONTRASTS

By Maud Howe

Author of "A Newport Aquarelle," etc.



PALAZZO RUSTICUCCI, Rome, April 16, 1899.

SUNDAY afternoon we went over to hear Vespers at St. Peter's (music by Palestrina). The service was celebrated in the gorgeous Cappella del Coro. It must have been some especial festa, for the chapel was even more magnificent than usual, the priests wore extra fine, flowered brocade robes, the air was bluer and heavier with incense, there were more candles. The slumberous canons in purple gowns and gray rabbit-skin capes dozed in their fretted stalls. Over their heads, in the carved and gilded gallery, stood the choristers, two by two, each pair holding between them a quaint black-lettered music-book; behind the choir was the organ, in front the leader, baton in hand. They all wore white, lace-trimmed cottas over black gowns. Their voices, dominated by the piercing sweetness of the soprano (the Pope's angel), filled the chapel with an almost overpowering melody that flowed through the gilded gates and floated out into the distant aisles and transepts of the great church.

Wandering about after service, we came upon the tomb of Palestrina, in the transept near the chapel where his "Magnificat" had rung out so gloriously.

"The Church has a long memory for its saints, sinners, and master workmen. If I thought it would remember me, now, I would take the vows to-morrow," somebody said in my ear. It was Patsy.

"Jolly to think," he went on, "of the old boy who led that choir and composed that music for 'em—he died, you know, in 1594—lying here within the smell of the incense, within the sound of his own harmonics." Patsy's only instrument is the guitar.

"I like incense," he went on,—"the Roman populace smells no sweeter than in the days Shakespeare wrote about them,—but its real value, of course, lies in its being a germ-destroyer."

Here Claire came up. We had scarcely finished asking her news when Mr. Z. joined us.

"Looking at the tomb of Palestrina?" he said. "That reminds me, would you ladies like to go and see the town from which he took his name? It is an opportunity—the greatest living authority on polygonal walls is going with us."

"Never heard of a polygonal wall," Claire began ("You'd not

give a hoot to see one," murmured Patsy), "but I would go anywhere for a day in the country this divine weather, provided the company was good."

"And the food," Patsy put in.

Mr. Z. smiled: "I think the ladies may trust me for that," he said. Then he gave Claire and me directions for meeting at the station and left us.

"Z. is a silly old gloat, but there is no malice in him," Patsy said; "his Antonio is the best cook in Rome. It is part of the law of compensation that the biggest bores always have the best chefs."

We had perfect weather for the trip to Palestrina. All the women, like Claire, had come for the day's outing in the country, the men were grimly intent upon polygonal walls—all but one, Patsy, the uninited, who turned up at the station and said he "would go along to have a try at the *vino di paese*, and to see if the girls of Palestrina were as pretty as the girls of Præneste."

As we did not feel responsible for him (he is a relation of the Z's), we were thankful to see his handsome face. Express trains do not stop at Palestrina, so we had to take a local, which crawled. One does not mind crawling across the Campagna, in sight of the trees and tombs of the Via Appia beside the long lines of brown aqueducts, broken here and there into picturesque groups of arches. As we approached the Alban Hills we found a hazy scarf of pink gauze spread about their feet and half way up to their knees—on nearer view the rosy veil proved to be the fruit-trees in blossom.

At the dull little station of Monte-Compatri Colonna there was a delay. Patsy, in search of diversion, tried to get out of the carriage. The door was locked. He put a long leg out of the window and made as if he would climb out. Excitement among the peasants on the platform. Everybody talked at once; four women and three men rushed to the window.

"Eccellenza, for charity's sake have patience! The door is capable of being opened!" urged the vendor of *passa tempi* (salted melon-seeds).

An old woman with a basket of assorted fruits threw herself passionately in the breach.

"For the love of the Madonna, *illustrissimo*, have a care, you will do yourself an injury. The door opens, I assure you it is true. That *ignorante* of a guard! Where has he gone? The *Capo Stazione* himself should interest himself in your Signoria."

Patsy put out his head and one arm. The vendor of the straw-covered flasks of red and white wine joined the group.

"This is a serious affair, *amici miei*," he said. "Signori, restrain the gentleman! Between ourselves now, is he mad? If so, my brother, who is of the carabinieri, can easily be summoned."

Patsy by this time had got one shoulder out and was frantically waving an arm and a leg. That was too much for the immemorial beggar with the head and beard of Jove, who for forty years has sat upon that platform and begged. He laid down his tray of matches and hurried off on one leg and a crutch to the office of the *Capo Stazione*. Meanwhile the guard came out of the restaurant furtively wiping his mustache. He rushed at the carriage with his key. Only one person on the platform had maintained his equilibrium: the waiter from the restaurant, a man of the world, continued to walk calmly up and down the platform, offering the atrocious chicory brew—he called it coffee—to the other passengers. He rather superciliously let us alone.

The guard hurried to the window. "I asked the Signori before I allowed myself to attend to my duties at Colonna if any of the illustrious ones desired to descend. You yourself, Excellency, assured me you desired nothing!" He fitted the key to the door as he spoke.

"Behold, did I not speak the truth?" said the fruit-seller, "am I not right? the door opens."

Patsy leaned comfortably back in the corner and lighted a cigarette. The *Capo Stazione* arrived, hastily buttoning his gold-laced coat. He looked daggers at the guard.

"What is wrong? If there has been any inattention it shall be reported. How is this? One of the travellers obliged to get out of the window, and now that the door is open nobody alights?"

"That gentleman," said Patsy, nodding towards Mr. Z., "wished to see if he could climb out of the window. Do not trouble yourselves, he is not mad, merely an original. So sorry you should have been disturbed." The *Capo* bowed politely to Patsy, fixed poor Z. with a freezing stare, and returned with Olympian dignity to that stuffy seat of authority, his office. The Jove-like beggar leaning on his crutch in his curiosity to see us forgot to beg.

"*Un fiasco di vino!*" said the wine-seller, thrusting a flask into the carriage.

"*Portogalil!*" called the old fruit-woman.

"*Caffe due soldi la tazza* (coffee three cents a cup)!" cried the waiter.

"*Pronti* (ready)!" roared the guard.

"*Taratara!*" screamed the station-master's horn.

"*Partenza!*" and that was the last we saw of Monte Compatri Colonna.

Between Colonna and Palestrina Patsy allowed us to enjoy the view, really well worth seeing. We had enchanting glimpses of the Alban, Sabine, and Volscian mountains; the valleys between blazed with wild-flowers. At the station the party divided, Mr. Z., the expert on polygonal walls, and the rest going in the stage, Patsy, Claire, and ourselves crowding into a *botte*.

"Trouble with those fellows is they know too much of one thing and too little of anything else. You'd be talked to death and sick of the subject if I had not come along to save your lives."

"I should like to know what we have come to see," I feebly protested.

"Nonsense!" said Claire; "they have crammed it all out of books; you can cram a great deal better afterwards. It takes the edge off to read too much about a thing before you see it. Don't read the guide-book till you have seen the thing and got your own impression, neat."

The road from the station leads up a sharp incline, winds through the steep and dirty streets of Palestrina, a hillside town, which stands upon the ruins of the Colonnas' mediæval stronghold, which again stands upon the ancient town of Præneste, extolled by the Latin poets. That Præneste, with its magnificent Temple of Fortune, the resort of the fashionable Romans of the days of Mæcenas, seems modern compared to the ancient Præneste whose ruins are found beneath it, and whose arx was the spot chosen for the picnic luncheon. It was a stiff climb. We left the carriage at Castel San Pietro, and scrambled to the summit where that magnificent and indomitable race, the Italiotti, built their citadel. Here we saw remnants of the polygonal (we used to call them cyclopean) walls. Astonishing structures, making the walls of the three later periods, the latest exquisite brick work of the Empire, seem by comparison like the work of children! The huge rocks are fitted together without cement of any sort, and in some places the walls look as solid as the day they were built, long before Rome was! To make room for our table-cloth, an old shepherd obligingly drove his sheep a little lower down the mountain. He was knitting stockings for one of his grandchildren; he has four to bring up. Their mother is dead, their father—he went years ago to Buenos Ayres—has ceased to write or to send money.

A pretty girl spinning with a distaff asked shyly if she could help. Patsy sent her for water while he set the table.

"We could not have her handling the food, you know, but she is so decorative that we want to look at her while we eat and drink. Antonio has outdone himself (he knew I was coming); this ham really has been boiled in vino di Montefiascone, as I suggested. The girls of Palestrina are as handsome as the girls of Præneste." The girl had come back, a dripping *concha* poised on her head.

"How do you know so much about the girls of Præneste?"

"Go and see the Ficoronian Cista, and you will know as much. It was found near here in the Necropolis. It is a green bronze toilet casket, with the most corking pictures, from the story of the Argonauts, engraved upon it I ever saw. Pollux has just licked Amycus, you know, for interfering with their preëmpting the spring of water, and tied him up to a tree as he deserved. Then you have the Greeks

drinking out of the spring, the good ship Argo in the harbor, Jason and Hercules, one of the Argonauts in the attitude of boxing, a fat old Silenus mimicking him. Female beauty is represented by Athena and Nike, who seem to be offering a victor's crown to the lucky Pollux. It's up to date, I can tell you. The girls are no prettier than Armida there; find me the man who can do her like the fellow who engraved that Cista, and I will pay him to make her portrait."

"How long ago was the casket made?" Claire asked.

"If you must have a date, 700 B.C. is as good as another. Heigh ho! The world's grown lazy! All this talk about modern industry makes me tired. Where's the energy in any race on earth to-day to build an arx like this? To live on the top of a steep hill like this, to trundle itself and its chattels up and down? Our civilization compared to Præneste's is barbarism by every standard I know."

"You don't know much," said Claire. "I know you have waited too long for your luncheon. Your views will improve directly."

As we eat, Armida, awkwardly weaving a garland of oak-leaves after a pattern Patsy made her, watched us with shy, hungry eyes. She and I exchanged glances (not a word was spoken) which said,—

"Signora, I have rarely tasted white bread—never such a *pasticcchio* as the Signorino is giving to the shepherd's dog!"

"*Figlia mia*, all that remains of the feast shall be for you and the shepherd. You will divide with him?"

"*Stia sicura* (rest assured)!" said Armida's honest eyes.

There was wine in an amphora—how had Patsy managed it? He poured the first glass on the ground in libation.

Looking at Armida, and raising his glass, "*Alle belle ragazze di Palestrina!*" he said. The shepherd's dog sniffed the spilt wine scornfully.

"*Tutti gi Inglese sono matti* (the English are all mad)!" muttered the shepherd.

PALAZZO RUSTICUCCI, Rome, June 26, 1899.

June in Italy is heaven. The weather is delicious. Life is pleasant and calm. J. has found a small American ice-chest, the only one in Rome; we are as proud as peacocks; Pompilia shows it off as if it were the great Kohinoor. It is an economy in ice, which has only lately been introduced, and is fabulously dear here. Nena fetches a tiny slab of artificial ice every afternoon; it is wrapped in thick felt, put into the American ice-chest, where it keeps the milk and wine cool. Green nuts are part of the summer bill of fare, fresh filberts in their jackets, green almonds, and English walnuts as much nicer fresh than dried as fresh figs are better than dry, or grapes than raisins.

Ignazio, our gardener, handsome, sympathetic, with a timid laugh, a hesitating manner, a real passion for his calling, was recommended to us as knowing more about roses than any man in Rome. The bur-

then of caring for our beloved flowers had become too great: the improvement since the expert took hold and properly grafted our roses is astonishing. Ignazio has to be restrained from quite ruining us. To him the natural order would be to spend the greater part of one's income upon one's flowers—I am not so sure he is not right! For weeks he has been talking about a new, rare flower—just the thing for the terrace—whose name he could not remember. When I asked him he took off his old cap, rubbed his head in a puzzled way, and complained that the English names were “too difficult.” I caught his enthusiasm and ordered the plants, though the price was high. To-day arrived six fine specimens of the wild American purple aster which overruns the fields and roadsides at home.

Signor Giacomo Boni, the architect in charge of the public buildings of ancient Rome, has a rival terrace. We went to see his Japanese lilies the other day. Fancy, he had a cherry-tree with ripe cherries on it, a peach-tree with peaches, a tame starling in a cage, and quite the most wonderful collection of plants and flowers I ever saw in so small a space. Signor Boni has planted on the Palatine, in the Forum, and in the Baths of Caracalla the flowers and shrubs mentioned in the classics as growing in those places.

PALAZZO RUSTICUCCI, Rome, August 3, 1899.

It was too hot for sleep last night, a rare thing in Rome. At half-past four this morning, when I went out on the terrace to water the plants, the smooth red tiles were still warm to the bare feet. The Piazza of St. Peter's was a sea of fog, out of which loomed the lantern of Angelo's dome; no other part of the great church was visible. A white mist from the Tiber rose like a wall between us and Mt. Soracte; the river and the mountain Horace loved are still the dearest things in the wide view of the Roman landscape. When the plants had been watered it was half-past five, just the right time for bicycling, so we set out. At this hour few people are abroad save the drivers of the heavy wains of hay—drawn by big, soft-eyed, gray oxen with magnificent branching horns—which creaked through the quiet streets, forbidden to them after eight o'clock. Though the Forum was reached before six, Signor Boni and his aides were already hard at work. Swarms of men like so many busy ants were passing to and from the excavations, wheeling barrows full of earth, returning a little later with empty barrows.

“Where do you put the rubbish that you take out?” I asked.

The Capo smiled indulgently. “Every particle of the earth of the Forum is sacred,” he said. “We skim it off carefully in layers, keeping each layer quite separate from the others. Then we sift it layer by layer, sort whatever it contains, examine each bit of broken

glass, metal, pottery, and where it is possible piece the fragments together."

In a sacrificial layer, composed chiefly of the ashes and bones of victims offered at the altars of the gods, the Capo lately found the jaw-bones of several large dogs. These did not properly belong here, among the bones of beeves, sheep, and goats, the regulation sacrificial animals. The layer in which they were found proved to be of the time of Marcellus. Now, what were the bones of these big dogs doing there?

One dark night—it was in the days of Marcellus—the Goths descended for the first time upon Rome, the citadel came within an ace of being taken—would have been, but for the cackling of the silly geese, which roused the sleeping guards. The silly geese became sacred geese, and the faithless watch-dogs, who had failed to bark and give the alarm, were slaughtered at the altar—and that is how the big canine jaw-bones turn up to-day in the sacrificial layer of Marcellus! The Capo's dreamy blue eyes—the eyes of an enthusiast—glowed with an inner light as he unfolded this theory. Imagination, you see, is as important to the successful archæologist as it is to any other discoverer. He must have other things as well—a thorough knowledge of the classics, for instance. Did not Mme. Schliemann learn the whole of Homer by heart to aid her husband in his search for the tomb of Agamemnon?

If in reading Tacitus or Livy the Capo finds mention of a missing building or statue, he goes and looks for it in the place where according to the historians it ought to be—and where nine times out of ten he finds it! While he talked, his eyes never left the skilful hands of a workman patiently matching together pieces of brown terra-cotta from a large pile of shards.

"If we could only make up one complete tile!" he sighed.

We were in the temporary museum where the latest "finds" of the Forum are kept. The man at the next table was putting together a really beautiful vessel of dark-blue glass. It might have been the Myrrhene goblet of Petronius!

"The tiles are so ugly, so monotonous—why should you care? I could understand if a piece of that enchanting blue glass were missing!" I said.

"The cup is only a cup; beautiful if you will—but what does it teach us? nothing new. If we could find a whole tile now, it would fix the date of a building we are in doubt about." Scientific methods, you see; even in Rome we cannot escape them! Then we went and looked at the spot where the Jewish citizens of Rome piously burned the body of Julius Cæsar, and at what remains of the house where Cæsar lived, a corner of the dining-room, with the white mosaic pave-

ment, and a piece of wall, painted with a decoration of fruit, flowers, green trees, and a pointed bamboo trellis in the same style as the Villa Livia, built by the widow of Augustus, who, perhaps, had admired Aunt Calphurnia's dining-room, and when her time came to build imitated it!

In the house of the Vestal Virgins we saw some fine pavements lately uncovered. Vesta is by far the most interesting of the Roman divinities. Is there a shrine to her at Radcliffe? There should be. We owe Rome the higher education, as we owe her the law we live by, the army we conquer by. Close to the Temple of Vesta we saw the place where earthquakes were foretold by the simplest contrivance. On a white marble platform finely adjusted weights were placed so as to oscillate with the first, otherwise imperceptible, tremors of the earth—in this way the knowing ones were enabled to foretell the earthquakes to the populace. Not far from here is the point where lightning once struck, making a hole ever after held sacred. It was turned into a sacred well, wherein jewels, cups, and other precious offerings were thrown by the devout or the superstitious. Both these shrines are very near the Temple of Vesta. Was it by chance that the fanes of the three things primitive man fears most, fire, earthquake, and lightning, should be so near together. The Capo thinks not.

"Now come and see the Republican well I have just found," he said, leading the way to a deep pit in the form of an amphora, with smooth, rounded, cement sides.

"Notice the work they did in the days of the Republic; it is far better than the work of the Empire. See this cement, as perfect as the day it was laid."

"What did you find in this well?" we asked.

"Come and see. Here are a great number of styluses—the Roman pens used for writing on wax tablets (do you suppose some poor devil of a literary man threw them in—in a moment of despair?)—and the entire contents of a Republican butcher's shop. See, there is the great cleaver, these are the knives—even the wooden handles are intact. These round stones are the weights; here is the thigh-bone of the last ox slaughtered before the shop came to grief, and here—take it carefully, it is of terra-cotta—is the butcher's lamp. Do you make out the design? It is in the shape of an inflated oxhide."

I never saw the like of that lamp! Of all the precious things the Capo has unearthed, I most covet the Republican butcher's squat little earthenware lamp with the neck of the skin pursed together to hold the wick.

"Now come and look at the true Via Sacra: You see it lies several feet below the road we used to call the Sacred Way. Do you observe how much finer this early pavement is than the later paving? But

wait, I shall show you better yet—the earlier the work the better the workmanship.”

As we stood on the large squares of smooth gray stones a cloud veiled the hot August sun, a shadow crossed the pavement. Might it not have been just here that Horace tacked to avoid meeting that bore, Crispinus?—When midsummer comes and everybody goes away, and there remains only Rome, ourselves, and the mighty ghosts, these grow so real that I wonder if I dreamed the tea-party, picnicking Rome of winter and spring.

“Here is the Basilica Emilia. We should not have been able to excavate this if it had not been for Mr. St. Clair Baddeley, who raised the money in England to buy the land and indemnify the owners of the houses we were obliged to pull down. Look at these two delightful bas-reliefs; have you ever seen such a treatment of the acanthus?”

The reliefs are the most florid—one might almost say “baroque”—acanthus designs I have ever seen. In one the flower in the centre of the “curlycue” ends in a prancing horse; the other terminates in some apochryphal beast like a dragon.

“Wait, wait till I make a copy of this adorable white and green pavement,” I cried. It was a geometrical design in Emilia’s Basilica that I have never seen either in Egypt or Greece.

“For that you will not need me,” said the Capo; “it is growing late and hot; now for the Lapis Niger!” Like a child, he had kept the best of the feast for the last. As we went, I picked up a small piece of iridescent glass, opal, rose, and pearl, a bit of heaven’s rainbow dug from the “sacred earth.”

“What might this have been?” I asked.

“That we shall see, perhaps part of a tear bottle, perhaps a fragment of the vessel in which the Vestals daily brought lustral water for the altars from the Fountain of Egeria!” Was he laughing at me?

I shall not forget the sensation produced by the first sight of the Lapis Niger, the black stone of the so-called tomb of Romulus. Whether the smooth slab of black marble actually covered the ashes of Romulus, or a later monument was put up to his memory, has not yet, I believe, been established. They do know that the inscription on the cippus beneath the stone is written in the most ancient Latin which has yet come to light—the epigraphists are still cracking their brains trying to read it. Is it not pleasant to have the sceptical German historians routed? To have our Romulus and Remus given back to us, our Tarquins, our Numa Pompilius and Egeria? To tell the truth, I never gave them up, I always kept a sneaking belief in demigods and heroes, took Hawthorne’s word against the Teutons. Now I am being justified right and left. Boni finds the Tomb of Romulus in the Roman Forum, Dr. Evans finds the palace of Minos, the labyrinth of the Minotaur, in Crete.

To comfort-loving persons Rome is the most satisfactory place for the study of man—from the savage of thirty centuries ago in his tree coffin fished up from the bottom of Lake Trasimeno (now at the Museum Papa Giulio) to Victor Emanuel in his tomb at the Pantheon. Think of it, the first King of Young Italy sleeping in a temple of Ancient Rome which has been in constant use ever since the day it was built! Athens is a thousand times more beautiful than Rome, but to the ultra modern Greece seems on the outskirts of to-day. Here, here in Rome we fancy we are in the midst of things. And creature comforts are still to be had, as in the days of Lucullus—(I recommend you an omelette soufflée aux surprises a la Grand Hotel! Outside an ordinary hot soufflée—the surprise is the heart, cold, sublimated chocolate ice-cream!)

Not long since, while lunching at that luxurious restaurant, we became aware of a personage at the next table. Everybody looked at him; it was impossible not to look at him. He was a large, masterful man, with a high color, young gray hair, and a look of power I have not often met. We began to guess his nationality. I immediately claimed him. "He is an American, a Western Senator from Montana or Washington State."

There was something large and dauntless about him, the free look of one coming from a young country.

"Please find out who that gentleman at the next table is," our host said to the waiter.

The man seemed surprised at the question.

"That is Cecil Rhodes, sir," he answered.

After that we could not help catching some of his talk—perhaps we did not try very hard; it was brilliant, exhilarating, and cordial. His guests were not more *en rapport* with him than the rest of us in the room. He was not unconscious that the people who sat near, the waiters, even the sphinx-like manager, hovering in the offing with impassive face, were thrilled by being in his company; nor could his attitude be called conscious. He merely seemed aware of us; he could no more help dominating the chance crowd in a fashionable restaurant than his fellows in the Transvaal.

It happened that after lunch we took our friends "sight-seeing" to the Kircheriana Museum, where we found one of the earliest Roman citizens and his wife, still lying side by side in the very earth the mourners threw over them, his rude stone weapons, her primitive household utensils, close to their hands. There, you see, are the two ends of your chain of interest (there is not a missing link between)—the prehistoric man at the Kircheriana Museum and Cecil Rhodes, the man who is making history, on his way to South Africa, lunching at the Grand Hotel!

IN THE SPRINGTIME

By Henry Wysham Lanier

I.

PERKINS was a sportsman: all the women who knew him said so. Moreover, the walls of his bachelor "den" were lined with fishing-rods of every description and with a perfect arsenal of fire-arms, from a Purdy sixteen-gauge shot-gun to a rusty Mauser picked up from the battle-field of San Juan; while the finishing touches were given by a moose's head, spreading sixty inches, which stared across from over the book-case at a gigantic tarpon by the door, varnished and mounted on a board with the line and hook that took him. Perkins gave teas here, and everything visible had a story.

The only discordant note at these functions was apt to come from Murdock, who was generally present whether he was invited or not, and who had a way of turning the conversation to certain recent excursions which had not been altogether successful. There was the trip to the Adirondacks, for instance, where the deer brought down by Perkins with a long and most difficult shot proved to be a pet fawn owned by a farmer's daughter; but, as Perkins justly said, lots of wild ones had been seen quite as close to the hotel, and there was no distinguishing mark by which one could tell a tame deer a hundred yards off in the bushes: there would have been no trouble at all had not some of the fellows, out of pure spite, induced the farmer to refuse the fifty dollars offered him and to bring the case into court, so that all the papers got hold of it.

Then there was that unlucky expedition after quail down on Long Island: the very first day they went out a covey of birds wheeled around unexpectedly to the right, and when Perkins fired, the shot glanced from an oak-tree,—an accident liable to happen to anybody,—so that several dozen number eights landed in the guide's leg. Perkins had proved entirely equal to the emergency and had done everything possible: he had run four miles across country to get a horse and wagon to take the groaning man home; then, when by a singular mischance the country doctor had bungled things so that the hundred-dollar-a-visit specialist from the city shook his head and talked of blood-poisoning and amputation, Perkins had conveyed the sufferer to the best hospital in New York and kept him there three months, paying him full wages all the time.

He felt that in a final survey of this chronicle there was more than one circumstance to his credit. Still, it was irritating to have Murdock always lugging in something of the sort, especially before Miss Blythe, and he would willingly have seen less of the fellow; but this was difficult without an open rupture, for Murdock had been most persistently friendly ever since they had both met Miss Blythe at the Vandewaters'.

It was with mixed feelings, therefore, that Perkins received an invitation from Jimmie Warburton to a spring house party at his country place in honor of the opening of the trouting season.

"There ought to be some fish this year," said Jimmie, "for I've had the constable watching the brooks all winter; anyhow, a lot of people'll be out: Ethel Blythe and Miss Ffrench and Murdock and a whole gang."

Perkins had an instinct that part of this was a message straight from Mrs. Jimmie's lips to him. He had confided in her—everybody confided in pretty Mrs. Jimmie: she was too much in love with her husband for any but vicarious emotional diversions, holding in her deft hands, consequently, a surprising assortment of other people's tangled threads—and he knew women were such incorrigible match-makers that he could see the whole thing at a glance. It was rather a bore to have Murdock there, but it was awfully good of Mrs. Jimmie, and, of course, she had obligations of hospitality to all sorts of people. So he accepted enthusiastically.

It was still a week before the first of the month, when the law went off, and during that time Perkins saw so much of Miss Blythe that he was more than ever convinced of some expert social manipulation in his behalf by his hostess. His seat at table was beside her, while Murdock was on the other side at Mrs. Jimmie's left. As Perkins expected, the former did not fail to follow his reminiscences with embarrassing particularity.

"Say, Perky, tell 'em 'bout that new dog," he called across. "Perkins has got a dog that Old Dan says beats anything he ever saw as a 'stayer.'"

Perkins flushed. "There's nothing to tell," said he, "except that I tired the poor brute out."

He caught a glance from Miss Ffrench across the table which showed that she at least understood as he wished the modesty that curtailed a narrative of his physical prowess. He had been interested in this slender, dark-eyed, silent person ever since his arrival. She had a way of seeming to hide something, to conceal her own femininity as it were, which was sure to attract a man's attention. In some way which Perkins himself could hardly have explained, he had been with her almost as much as with Miss Ethel during this visit. He had not sought her, but he had thoroughly enjoyed the hours spent in her com-

pany. She had, for a woman, unusual appreciation of the fine points of sport. He had wondered many times how old she was and what a man would find if he succeeded in getting at the hidden temperament over which she always held a semi-transparent veil. He now decided that she was, as he had fancied, very sympathetic.

"I see," persisted Murdock, "that I myself must sing the saga of Royal Rambler. He was a pup of high degree, descended from all the dog princes in the records. Perky bought him of Batson."

He looked at Jimmie Warburton, and Jimmie suddenly swallowed something the wrong way. "Batson, eh?" he finally managed to get out between coughs.

Murdock's left eyelid fluttered for just half an instant. "Batson knows about dogs," he remarked judicially.

At this Jimmie turned hastily and began to tell a story to Beresford. It was clearly a funny story.

"Perkins tried him first on partridges with Uncle Dan down in West Virginia," went on Murdock. "He told the old man all about the dog beforehand. Next morning they went out, and after scrambling over the bowlders a couple of hours they got into the Bitter Lick valley there, where it's 'putty tol'ble brugadoo,' as Dan himself admits. Great partridge country though. They were both cheered up by the prospect. 'Now,' says Perky, 'I'll show you how a dog that's real thoroughbred hunts.' So he called Royal Rambler, to start him into the cover. But Royal Rambler hadn't a ramble left in him: he simply lay down with his head on a rock and hung out his tongue each time Perky whistled. 'Seems to have stayin' power as you say,' remarks Uncle Dan after a while. He wouldn't tell me what Perky said: declared he was a Deacon now and it might get him into trouble with the church.

"They tried for an hour to arouse his sporting blood with sticks and other things; then Uncle Dan got angry and wanted to shoot him. But Perky assured him he was too valuable a dog for that, so he carried him all the way home in his arms. Ten miles, wasn't it, Perky?—Bitter Lick miles at that. Dan swore it was the pup's pedigree that broke him down: he 'lowed as no dorg ever littered c'd carry sich a load as that over th' West Ferginny mountings."

Miss Blythe joined in the general grin; she had heard before of the "Only Original Batson," dealer in dogs and Historical Fictions.

"Personally, I'm convinced he was wrong," added Murdock solemnly, "for I've studied the details of the mystery till I've really sherlocked the truth. The first point was that the dog had a special aversion to mountains—don't forget that; then I remembered that Batson used to live out on the Western plains (left on account of the climate, he told me—too hot for him); and from these two facts I deduced that

between the laverack and thoroughbred English bloods in that pup there must have been a basic strain of prairie-dog——”

A shout went up from the other men.

“Poor dog,” murmured Miss Ffrench. Perkins heard her and looked across into her big, limpid, brown eyes; clearly she was a very unusual girl. He turned to Jimmie’s younger brother to escape the volley of chaff from the end of the table.

“So the season opens to-morrow, Leonard.”

“Yes,” said the boy gloomily. “It does in this State—two weeks later in New York, you know. As you might expect, the only decent brook is over the line, Rocky Creek. But it don’t make much difference, as far as to-morrow is concerned, for we’re going to have a regular nor’west storm to-night unless I’m mistaken. There’ll be no fishing, sure as a gun.”

In his other ear Perkins heard Miss Blythe reply to some remark of Murdock’s which he had missed. “A man without persistence is beneath contempt,” she declared. “I haven’t an atom of respect for anybody who doesn’t carry things through.”

“I shall try it anyhow, rain or shine,” announced Perkins loftily. And then he began to get from Leonard minute details as to the streams. He was vaguely pleased to notice out of the tail of his eye that Miss Ffrench was listening intently.

Murdock leaned over to hear a whispered reproof from Mrs. Jimmie. He too had confided.

“Well,” he replied, “what does she do it for? I can understand that he’s in love with her,—that’s a sort of epidemic, confound it,—but what in the name of the stuffed prophet does she see in that imitation man?”

“The most difficult problem for every man I know,” remarked Mrs. Jimmie placidly, “seems to be the question of what any charming girl can see in any other man.”

II.

PERKINS woke at four the next morning. He had set his mind sternly upon that on going to sleep. Incidentally, he had left all the windows open, and a raw, cold breeze, having searched out the interstices of the bedclothes, was playing gently up and down his spine to assist his resolution. Outside, a steady *drip, drip, drip* from the roof proved Leonard a true prophet. It didn’t feel or look like trout that gray, wet, cheerless morning. But Miss Blythe’s words rang in his ears, and he reasoned that the more exigent the conditions, the greater the chance to statmp himself in her eyes as a man of resolution, dominating all external circumstance.

So out he crawled with chattering teeth into the penetrating atmosphere and hastily proceeded to clothe his goose-flesh in the heaviest things he had, pulling on over all a pair of hip canvas boots, a short mackintosh, and a waterproof slouch hat. Having stowed away in his innermost pockets sandwiches, flask, pipe, and tobacco, he went softly downstairs and out the back door, rod and net in hand.

The rain was driving heavily down on a northwest slant, and Perkins felt somewhat like the leader of a forlorn hope as he took the first force of it. He glanced back, wishing Miss Blythe might witness his undaunted exit, and he had a vague impression of some movement at a second-story window; but it was too dark to distinguish anything, so he strode on around the maple-trees along the path leading to the stream that flowed through the Warburton estate.

It soon became clear that the trout had no respect for the calendar; after covering all the likely water down to the pond without a single rise, he stopped and sat down under the lee of a big oak to consider. He hated to go back without a single fish. Murdock would surely seize the chance for some of his attempts at humor. He remembered that Leonard had pronounced Rocky Creek the only good stream anyhow: to Rocky Creek he would go. It was a good three miles across country, but he was into the thing now and must see it through, or he might better never have attempted it.

So he struck out through the woods up the steep hillside to the west. When he reached the open meadows on the higher ground he was met by the full sweep of the gale, and he had to bend far over to make his way into the teeth of the wind. He pushed doggedly on, however, scraping through patches of wild blackberry bushes and greenbriars in the corners of the fields, scrambling over stone walls, and plodding across last season's corn-stubble, much impeded by his clumsy wading-boots, but determined to test Rocky Creek.

Suddenly, as he paused for breath on the top of a stone wall, something hard and icy smote him on the nose; then he experienced a similar sensation on his hand: the rain was turning to hail.

For an instant he wavered, but the alluring face of Miss Blythe appeared before his mind's eye and he resolutely leaped forward off the wall, holding, like Columbus, straight into the west. The proportion of sleet and hail in the downpour increased steadily; after all, though, it was no worse than rain when one's mind was made up to it; and Perkins pressed forward over the uneven ground, walking more briskly to keep warm.

He crossed the lonely country road at last and took fresh courage from this landmark, which he judged must be about half way to the creek. Ahead was a mile-wide stretch of open, rounded, rocky meadows,

with a few scattering apple-trees; and beyond that lay the edge of the big woods through which Rocky Creek must flow.

By the time he had covered quarter of this distance the hail had changed to snow. The wind howled across these exposed ridges more fiercely than ever, dashing the big flakes cuttingly into his face and clogging up his spectacles. A harrowing doubt crossed Perkins's mind: had he perhaps reached that indefinite line where persistence shifts from the sublime to the absurd? It did seem ridiculous to be out on those bare slopes in a real blizzard with a four-ounce bamboo and a landing-net. But he did not dare to turn back now without even finding the stream; his ambition settled down to that: just to cast over it once seemed a sufficient exploit.

A little farther along he struck a tiny meadow brook meandering down the hillside and followed it, hoping it would bring him to the larger stream. It began to look trouty soon, where it entered a piece of woodland, so he amused himself by flipping his flies ahead between the branches. Presently, casting past a great boulder around which the brook trickled and cascaded downward, he was electrified to feel a smart strike. With a whoop of triumph he swung a tiny trout clear out of the water. He was well beneath the legal six inches, that little, red-spotted fish, but Perkins gloated over him as he would ordinarily over a two-pounder, and stowed him safely away. Perhaps there would be something doing, after all.

A hundred yards farther, however, the swift brook settled down into a tussocky swamp, full of a tangled low growth, almost impenetrable, but no protection from the driving snow. It was nearly impossible to cast against the wind, and even when he did succeed in landing the flies on the elusive thread of water he could not distinguish them from the snow-flakes. In desperation he struck out again for the higher ground in the thick woods.

It was beginning to look like real winter in the forest, for the wood-road along which he tramped wearily was white with half an inch of snow. Perkins's courage wavered again under these cumulative obstacles. He would turn back before he disgraced himself by getting lost.

He decided, however, to have some lunch before returning. Backing in under the close, flat boughs of a couple of spruces, which formed an admirable shelter, he sought comfort in the sandwiches and flask. Following this up with a pipe, he found himself so much refreshed that he took heart once more. He must be close to the stream now, and he had proved the fish would rise; it was only eleven o'clock: he would stick to it and make the other fellows sing small enough when he brought in his prizes.

III.

It must have been at almost exactly this moment that a strange experience befell Constable Sam Molloy. This officer of the law had had a wild night in pursuit of a horse-thief, finally capturing the fugitive at three in the morning, twenty miles across country. He had reached home at daybreak, plastered with mud, drenched to the skin, and quite worn out, and had promptly dropped fathoms deep into the slumber of the righteous the instant he had gulped down the last mouthful of his breakfast.

It was some hours later—they might have been æons for all the Constable knew—that he began to dream the whole village was burning up. Yes, that was the alarm-bell ringing—louder, louder, louder, continuously, deafeningly, maddeningly.

Mr. Molloy awoke with a start that severed a snore into a gasp and a groan. The telephone bell was jangling away as if it would never stop. He rolled over and tried to close out the din with the bedclothes. The bell kept straight on. He swore at it, first under his breath, then aloud and volubly. It stopped just long enough to make a blissful contrast and arouse a hope—then it began again.

There came into the Constable's mind some honeyed phrases of the article in last week's *Advocate* which had described him and his doughty deeds as a terror to malefactors and as "one of the most picturesque features" of the village. "In the pursuit of Duty," perorated the panegyrist, "Samuel Molloy knows neither fear nor fatigue." Sam had rolled this under his tongue at the time and it now arose to plague him. It was clearly his duty to get up and answer that bell: somebody's house might have been broken into; or there might have been a murder over in the Italian settlement. This sense of responsibility conquered the weakness of the flesh—after he discovered that even stuffing the bolster down on top of both ears failed to stifle the bell's alarms. He half fell out of bed and staggered over to the telephone.

"Hello—hello—hello!"

The ringing, now a buzzing in his ears, did not falter for an instant.

"Hello!" he shouted angrily. "HELL-O!"

"Is that Constable Molloy?"

"Yes, it is. Who are you and what do you——"

"Hold the wire," commanded some one.

Mr. Molloy sought relief in language, while a cold draught toyed with his ankles.

"Hello—is this the Constable?" asked a voice. "I've been trying to get you for more than an hour."

Sam grunted, not trusting himself further.

"I have reason to believe that there's a man breaking the law by fishing over on Rocky Creek to-day: that's across the line, and the season doesn't open, as you know, for two weeks. You'll probably find

him somewhere between the bridge and Sheep Hill Road. And oh, by the way, he's rather a desperate character, so you'd better go prepared. Good-by."

"Stop, there—hello, hello!—who in—I mean, who are you?" called the Constable.

There was no answer.

He rang the bell furiously. "Well, I'll be juggled!" he muttered. "Of all the fool things—in this tarnation blizzard. Hello, Central, who was that talking to me just now?" he demanded gruffly. There was a pause. Finally the Constable remarked, in a strangely altered tone: "Oh, 32 L—Mr. Warburton's? I see. Good-by."

Sam looked thoughtful as he hung up the instrument. This was different. If Warburton was sending the message, that settled it, for the second half of a fat fee was still to come for an extra careful policing of the trout streams that season. It had been a lady's voice—that was queer, very queer; had he known that it was Miss Ffrench speaking, and had he seen the care she had taken to prevent anybody from overhearing, he might have thought it queerer still. (It is just possible that Perkins too might have found food for thought in these facts had they come to his attention.) But in Mr. Molloy's varied professional experiences he had found it wise not to try always to know the reasons why—particularly the female ones. Anyhow, it made no difference, he reflected. With a countenance of utmost disgust he pulled on boots and oilskins, gazing out of the window at the clouds of snow hurled along horizontally by the shrieking wind.

"Trouting, to-day!" he exclaimed aloud. "I'd like to give him as many black and blue places as a trout has spots."

And with this he flung out of the house and headed for the bridge over Rocky Creek.

IV.

PERKINS could not restrain a shout when at last he found himself at the deep ravine along the bottom of which brawled Rocky Creek. Climbing and sliding eagerly down the steep hillside between the clumps of laurel, he set himself to the task of decoying some venture-some fish from the dark, cold holes amid the bowlders around which the water boiled and tumbled. He was sheltered from the storm down here, so he fished on downstream with care, wading in the shallows, leaping from rock to rock, dropping his flies twenty feet ahead in every riffle and eddy and deep pocket. The trout behaved as any rational trout should: they simply lay low and paid no attention to silver doctors or Parmacheenee belles or stone-flies or Montreals or any other combinations of the fly-maker, large or small, light or dark, gay or dull.

But at length, in a shallow, rippling stretch, a misguided youngster seized the tail-fly as it danced over his head. A few moments of excite-

ment—and Perkins, standing on a big stone in the middle of the stream, held in his hand a quarter-pounder. He concluded to let it go at that and make a bee-line for home: "a couple of fish" would sound well enough for such weather, particularly if uttered with just the right tone of nonchalance.

Taking out the first fish, he was surprised to find how small it really was. Still, he was not disposed to be hypercritical if Miss Blythe only appreciated, as she doubtless would, the determination necessary to secure them.

As he reflected upon the "moving picture" evoked by this thought he was dumfounded to hear a hoarse voice behind him.

"Throw up your hands!" it commanded.

Perkins turned, cautiously, for the rock was round and slippery. There on the bank, not twenty feet away, stood a small man clad in yellow oilskins. Beneath his dripping sou'wester stared a white, excited face. In either hand he held a big revolver, and both barrels covered Perkins in a most disagreeably personal way.

"Throw up your hands!" he repeated sternly.

Perkins tried to laugh, but his voice was creaky. "Is it a joke?" he asked with some effort.

This seemed to enrage the little man. "It'll be your last, if you insist on it."

Perkins started in to explain.

"Will you throw up them hands or not?" broke in the irate person on the bank. "I'd just about as leave you didn't," he added darkly.

A cold sweat broke out all over the angler. Probably the fellow was crazy, or he was some wild countryman who resented any fishing on his place. But there was a certain electric something that suggested action as more imperative than conjecture: slowly he elevated both hands, a fish in each.

"Now come ashore."

Perkins half dropped his arms, but immediately elevated them again at a movement on the other's part.

"How can I?" he asked plaintively, looking down at the swift water and the long steps between stones, "unless I——"

"You'll come either with your hands or your toes up," observed Mr. Molloy. He had been meditating on his way downstream as to all the different tricks and expedients which might be tried by this desperate law-breaker, and he didn't propose to take any chances. A fellow that'd fish in a blizzard just because it still was illegal would be up to anything.

Perkins looked wildly ahead, hesitated—and leaped. In his agitation he lost his balance, slipped, splashed into the deep hole between the boulders, and presently reached the bank with both boots quarter full of icy water. His hands, however, were still pointing skyward.

"What does this mean?" he broke out indignantly. "It's an outrage. I'll——"

"You'll march for the road," remarked Mr. Molloy, "that's what you'll do—and no fuss about it unless you want to carry some lead too."

Perkins marched. It was not easy going at best, but in this constrained attitude he was worn out before they had covered quarter of a mile. A dozen times he stumbled; then in despair he dropped fish and rod, thinking this might help a little.

"Pick 'em up," ordered Mr. Molloy, five yards in the rear. "Them's evidence. You can't work no little games on me."

Perkins looked behind. The sight he beheld caused a violent twitching in the small of his back. Sullenly he dug the trout with numb fingers out of a little drift of snow, picked up the rod, and resumed his trying attitude.

It was a mile to the road and then two miles to Renwick. Perkins never forgot that interminable journey through the blinding snow, his arms aching till he became possessed of a haunting dread that they would drop in spite of his efforts. At each sign of wavering, however, a sharp order from behind infused fresh energy into his failing muscles, and in this manner he made his weary way up and down hill, until at last they reached the Justice's home at Renwick.

This worthy promptly fined the culprit fifty dollars for fishing out of season and catching trout under size, and read him a long lecture. Perkins protested weakly, but did not dare to mention Warburton's name for fear the other men would get hold of the story.

"But I haven't a dollar with me," exclaimed the unhappy angler at last.

"Then take him to the lock-up, Constable," commanded his Honor.

After some impassioned pleading, Perkins secured the privilege of telephoning to his friends. It was a risky thing to do: he had ghastly visions of Murdock's face if he should hear of the miserable affair; but he had decided to invoke the aid of Miss Ffrench, and he felt sure that if he could just manage to get her at the telephone without attracting attention everything could be kept quiet.

By some astounding good fortune she answered the telephone herself. (Perkins puzzled his brains over this queer coincidence more than once later on.)

"I want to speak to Miss Ffrench: you needn't give any name—oh, is that really you? What a piece of luck!"

"That sounds very nice," came back a soft voice—it seemed positively angelic to Perkins. "But who is this?"

"It's I, Mr. Perkins. I've had a most incredible misadventure, and you're the only person I felt like asking to help me."

"Oh dear! what *has* happened," asked the lady in great agitation.

"I've been arrested for fishing before the season's open," said Per-

kins (the undersized trout was too small a thing to mention), "and I didn't bring any money with me. Could I ask you to get fifty dollars from the pocket-book in my room and send James over with it to the Renwick post-office just as fast as he can come?"

"How awful! Of course I will."

"And please, Miss Ffrench, don't say anything about it, and just tell James not to mention where he's going."

"Yes, yes, I will. You poor thing! Can't tell you how sorry I am—in all this storm too!"

"It's awfully good of you. I hated to bother you, but I knew you'd understand."

"The idea! But I must run right away. Good-by."

"Good-by." Perkins hung up the receiver with the first warmth about his heart which that unfortunate organ had felt for many hours.

Fortunately, the new invention which is to enable us to see by telephone is not yet perfected or he might have had a shock. Miss Ffrench's face at that moment resembled a cat's which sees a fat robin hopping towards her place of concealment.

V.

AN hour later, wet, cold, hungry, and wretched, Perkins beheld a buggy, drawn by a stocky brown cob he recognized, approaching along the village street. Side and front curtains were all up to keep out the snow.

Perkins rushed out as if to meet a long-lost brother.

"Well, James," he began, "you're a trump——"

He stopped short in amazement when the curtain was pushed a little aside, for he found himself looking into the depths of Miss Ffrench's mysterious dark eyes. Perkins was struck dumb by this unexpected apparition: he received the money which she held out and gave it to the Constable without a word. Then he climbed into the buggy, took the reins, and turned the brown cob homeward.

Not for several minutes did he break the constrained silence.

"I declare," said he finally, looking down sideways at her, "I don't know how to thank you enough."

"James had to go to the station," she explained awkwardly, "and I—I couldn't bear to let you wait."

There was something in her tone which affected Perkins profoundly. How womanly she was! She seemed to have a wonderful amount of feeling hidden away there, and sitting close beside her now his glow of gratitude suddenly merged into a very different emotion. His breath came quicker. Neither spoke for a long time. Then she remarked, with an effort at lightness which was belied by the catch in her voice,—

"I don't know what people will think."

Perkins turned as if she had stuck a pin into him. Looking squarely

at her, he was confronted by a sudden throb of agitation in her face. He found himself carried away by an irresistible impulse, by his sense of chivalry, by everything.

One large tear stole softly out of the eye nearest Perkins and rolled down a cheek as pale as marble. He seized the handkerchief she held and tenderly wiped away this evidence of distress.

At this Miss Ffrench broke down altogether. Perkins tried, of course, to comfort her. His arm did seem to soothe her slightly, but she still wept.

"Why, what is it? what is it?" he asked.

"You think I oughtn't to have come," she sobbed, after repeated urging.

"Nonsense!" replied Perkins.

"Yes, you do—I can see it plainly. I was at my wits' end, but I thought I *must* get that hateful money to you. And then you were so—so cold about it."

There was but one possible answer to this—that all-embracing reply which fits every crisis between man and woman, no matter how complex. And the first step upon this precipitous path makes retreat impossible.

VI.

PERKINS was lionized by the ladies that evening and he roared for them an expurgated narrative of his adventures. It was very pleasant; but later he found himself alone with Mrs. Jimmie.

They talked commonplaces for a while; then he noticed that she was looking at him curiously.

"What is it?" he asked. "Is my tie crooked?"

Mrs. Jimmie looked thoughtful. "I didn't mean to," she remarked irrelevantly, "but really I have *some* curiosity. It's all very well, this fishing trip, but what in the world induced you to go to-day?"

"It was the beginning of the season," explained Perkins in surprise.

"Well, it was the ending of something else," retorted Mrs. Jimmie. "Mr. Murdock proposed to Ethel Blythe and she accepted him while you were wandering through the snow."

For an instant Perkins, taken off guard, forgot everything. "Why, I only went because she said she admired men who carried things through," he lamented.

Mrs. Jimmie put her head down on her arms and shook with restrained emotion. Perkins was amazed to find she had cared so much about the match; of course, Murdock had nothing, whereas he himself was more than desirable in a financial summing-up. Evidently she hated to see such a charming girl throw herself away.

Presently Mrs. Jimmie said, still without looking at him, "Mr.

Murdock's determination seems to have worked more directly towards its goal."

"I congratulate them," declared Perkins, getting the words out with difficulty. "I can appreciate it the more as I am engaged myself—to Miss Ffrench."

Mrs. Jimmie jumped up and her eyes expanded into circles of wondering disbelief. Then she saw that he was in earnest, and threw politeness to the winds.

"How *ever* did you come to do that?"

Perkins wasn't quite sure what she meant, but his conscience was still squeamish over the happenings of the day. He started in on the defensive and floundered deeper and deeper.

"Well, you see, I had liked her from the first, and then she was a friend in need." He became conscious that he was making a poor fist of it. "Of course, I was—thinking a good deal about Miss Blythe;" he paused. Then in desperation he blurted out, "The fact is, when it came to the point, I shut my eyes."

Mrs. Jimmie gasped, but he hardly heard her.

"It's curious," he observed, half to himself, "how much one woman is like another if you can't see her."

VII.

"But, little woman," protested Warburton that night after bearing up against a flow of language, "what under heaven is it all about, anyhow?"

"Don't you *see*?" demanded Mrs. Jimmie. "Isn't it as plain as the nose on your face? I set to work to find out what had happened, and finally telephoned Molloy, the Constable—and, Jimmy, she regularly *trapped* him: the whole thing was arranged like a Punch and Judy show and that girl simply pulled the strings. It's disgusting!"

Jimmie whistled in comprehending wonder. Then he roared with laughter till his wife put her hand over his mouth lest he wake the baby. "Clever little minx!" he said at length. "Had him arrested, and then, when she'd put him into a proper frame of mind, cinched him, eh? Isn't she a dandy!"

"I don't see how you can talk so," said Mrs. Jimmie.

"Well, my dear," replied her husband, "she's got him; and I'll declare she has a much better right to his corpus than Perky has to that big varnished tarpon he's such a bore about, for she did the whole thing herself and landed him single-handed."

VIII.

THE Perkinses do not visit at the Warburtons': Perkins declares he used to think a great deal of Mrs. Warburton, but when he knew her better he began to fear it wasn't just the best influence for his wife.

"GRIT"

A TALE OF THE NEXT WAR

By Patrick Vaux



I.

IN the manager's room, Eastern Steam Towage Trust offices, Boston, the timepiece standing on Galbraith's desk noisily chimed eleven A.M. But neither the Manager nor Captain Daniel Hawkins heard its sharp notes.

"I'm sorry for you, Hawkins, real sorry! But our mortgage over that boat of yours, the Petrel, and the house falls in midday to-day, and there isn't the slightest chance of renewal. We put it on just as an obligation to you, as you know. But ye're behind with the interest, second half year's too!" said Galbraith, a softer note than usual in his gruff voice.

Hawkins remained silent now. Stupidly he looked at the top of the roll-desk, his big, awkward hands twisting his cloth cap out of all shape. Of what use were his simple, honest wits against the business methods of sharp-witted landmen? He was a mere child in their hands.

"You could have got more cash than ye asked for over the tug and house, and I daresay the difference would have been mighty useful now, in these hard times," the Manager added, reaching out his hand for some telegrams, carefully folded and in the lock-drawer opened by his side. "I reckon ye'll clear your feet all of a sudden some day soon and start afresh again; big work'll be comin' along. This d—d war is 'bout at an end: these Britishers seem well-nigh starved out. But that nasty row of ours with the Deutschers and Allies over these British liners transferred just too late to our flag—haulin' down the Stars and Stripes, these Sourkrouters!—is knockin' our carryin' trade clean out east'ard. Freights are scarce for Europe compared with last month's. Shippers and owners are very chary o' venturin' now!"

"Ay, sir, more cash, as ye say, 'ud have been mighty useful now. It's not me I'm thinkin' of," said Hawkins in a husky voice; "I can turn to an' git a job o' some sort 'bout the quays; but it's Bess an' the kid. Says Doctor Thorne, Florida is the only chance for both of them. God knows, I can't send 'em off South: not a dollar to my name! There hasn't been any work doin' in the deep-sea towage these two months back, ye know that, Mister Galbraith."

The man's tones breathed intense entreaty, his whole attitude was one of supplication. Only stress of circumstances had subverted his independence; Captain Daniel Hawkins was no man to curry favor.

Muttering beneath his breath about "cussed skinflint," the Manager shook his head, his eyes fixed stubbornly on the two telegrams. Impatiently he smoothed them out again and again. Close covered they were with code cipher.

"Well," he snapped, "Trust can't do any more for you; ye've got to stand on your own legs or fall. Ye're more fool than rogue, Hawkins! Shouldn't have paid wages to that crew of yours called in Saturday by the Navy Board—what were ye thinking 'bout? Thought ye were a boss millionaire, eh? Bills and so on ye should have left unsquared. Noodles' game to play the honest man when folk'll trick ye out of your living! Ye're over-honest, you are! Some blood of these punch-fist Britishers still moulds your stock, I guess. What I say is this: Directors instruct me to foreclose at midday if ye're in port. And if ye can't raise the cash, every stick and chattel, and the boat herself, 'll be sold up. We need cash too!" And with a surly grunt Galbraith opened his code book.

The Skipper took the hint. He stepped towards the door, all perception driven from him, for now was ruin imminent, and to dear ones no succor from the enclipping hand of slow Death. Blind-eyed with mental agony, he fumbled for the handle of the door.

It was in a stupor he heard the coarse, high-pitched voice of Galbraith.

"Who told ye to clear? I'm not finished with you! Here, come back, and sit down in that chair there by the desk." With a vicious click the Manager closed the telephone case. "What nobody hears, nobody blabs," quoth he to himself.

For a second or two he closely studied the face of the seaman. The frank features of the man lay open to the understanding of all. With approval Galbraith's gimlet eyes ran over the wiry, sparse figure with its carriage, fearless and candid. Hawkins was true as steel.

Nodding to himself, the Manager shot a fresh glance at the telegrams, at the clock, then back to the Skipper. He hitched his chair the closer.

"I said that mortgage falls in midday—if you're in port! Your business, Dan'el, is to get—get out to sea, and stay there till something comes 'long needing towage."

Hawkins shook his head. "It's not to be done, it's not to be done!" he answered in a monotone. "It 'ud be no pull. There's nothin' a-doin' east'ard."

"I say, move out to sea," Galbraith repeated forcibly. "You said if I got ye some deck-hands ye'd help shift that lumpin' tin canister

of a monitor 'tween twelve and one this afternoon; so your fires are lit. Move out, and that right away, 'spite the heavy weather. I'll lend an eye to the wife and kid, and I'll see Thorne this afternoon—called him up, just 'fore ye came in, to look in on me here. This is the very job for the like of you that's fond of rough weather," and he tapped the telegrams with his squab forefinger. "Our Secretary is at Washington, as ye know, trying to work a special pull there for Government charters on those three big liners we took over from S. S. Hay's Co. last month. Well, here's the wire he sends me:

" 'Fairfield, auxiliary cruiser, sailed Saturday night; no convoy; for Portland, Boston, New York, or the Delaware. May make far southing, but that depends on enemy. Got line from underwriters for intelligence and lookout. Special rates. Our No. 1 stands off Cod to Sankaty; No. 2, own waters, Cod to Ann; No. 3 in harbor, steam up to move out if required. Senior naval officer, Boston, to communicate signals.'

"Now," ejaculated Galbraith, "I can't hustle out a boat this afternoon, for there is all that press of work, with the Monadnock and Puritan and merchant vessels to be shifted around. You, Hawkins, go out No. 1, at the old rates of charter, for the first sight of her. If ye've got to handle the Cunarder, through good fortune, mind you, all risks—and dollars—are yours. We can't do more than stipulated for. My idea, Skipper, is that she'll try and make the Delaware; but who knows? She'll have to run the gauntlet of that hungry pack of cruisers in mid-Atlantic. You go out, sir. But out ye must be 'fore twelve A.M., or, by Joshua! the Trust forecloses."

Hawkins sat, trying to connect his thoughts. His eyelids trembled. Only the click of typewriters in the outer office filled the ear.

"Mister Galbraith," said he at last in a slow, quavering voice, "Ye're ——"

"Not so 'clean' a man as you, Dan'el, and that's truth," the Manager broke in with, jumping to his feet. "Clear out o' this. Sharp! I'll sling 'bout and get stores sent down to you and the signals. Give the Service man a receipt of delivery, and keep 'em close. Carry them in your head, Skipper. Get out, get out, 'fore this clock strikes mid-day!"

At fifteen minutes past midday the half-manned Petrel was already steaming slowly seaward down the Black Rock Channel to avoid the ice in the Narrows.

II.

VEHEMENT and more terrible than before was the world-wide struggle growing between the Dual Alliance of Britain and Japan and the newly formed Drei Bund. Russian aggression and duplicity in China and France's preconcerted seizure of Morocco had forced Britain and

Japan to take up arms in defence of political and commercial birth-rights. Then, in the fourth week of war, Germany, exhilarated by the short series of naval actions won by the Dual Alliance, but sorely weakening all Powers therein concerned, had cast herself into the embrace of the Continental allies for the long-wished destruction of the supremacy of her well-hated British cousin! 'Twas her greed, however, that was to bring her and the confederacy to ruin, for she had immediately detached her naval forces to secure possession of the British West Indies and Honduras, thinking to dominate Central America, the Canal, and win footing in the South. The United States had then to step into the arena in defence of her interests, and, standing back to back with the "Verflucht Bleich-und-Gelb Bündniss," was to bring the conflict to a speedy end.

During the fifth week of the war foul gales heavy with sleet and snow scourged the Atlantic from Staten Hook to Cape Hatteras. But the Petrel maintained her station all the dreary, dispiriting time. It was, however, on Saturday afternoon about six bells, or three o'clock, that Hawkins slowed down his engines and got soundings, then, heaving to his battered vessel, took thought with himself.

The squally gale was blowing hard out of the north-northeast, but Hawkins, clinging to the starboard rail of his dripping bridge, stared intently to eastward. All careless was he of the fillips of sea splashing over him. As he searched the murky distance the hunted expression deepened on his face, turning flexile muscles into rigid chords.

Beside the lashed wheel the Mate was stamping his half-frozen feet. When his sharp eye marked the thickening cloud that was driving low overhead in vague, gray masses he shook his head; soon the long-drawn gale was beginning to volley, more turbulent and freezing, from the desolate plateaus of Greenland.

"Dirty yet to wind'ard there," he yelled, gaining Hawkins's side. "It was a-humpin' things 'bout this mornin'; 'twill blow creation flat this night, I reckon. A mighty poor time to be at sea!"

The Skipper twisted his head round. "Not scared, are ye?" he cried, the vibrant notes of ill-concealed worry in his voice. "S'long as she strikes nothin' an' rides the seas ye're safe an' sound, aren't ye?"

"Scared? I guess not! I ain't that sort, Dan'el. It's jist them as are at home that I'm thinkin' 'bout, an' them short stores," snapped the Mate. Fixing his eye on the vomiting smokestack, which, like to the steel casing of the engine-room, was white with encrusted salt, he lapsed into angry silence, muttering and wagging his head to himself. But his Skipper was again gazing over the cresting ridges of sea. His contracted eyes, his strained attitude,—as if he were on the spring,—suggested that his vision was penetrating afar over the raging waste, and with supernatural power was sighting his long-desired end, the

Cunarder, broken down and wallowing helplessly about. This idea of his was now become an obsession. Not that he desired the resultant gain for himself; it was to bring back health and happiness to those depending on him. Even now his anguished heart was crying out that he ought to have remained at home, and not have staked all on such a chance issue; better to have let the mortgage fall in—and now been at his wife's and child's side. Galbraith would see to it that they did not want; but, oh God! what if both Bess and the boy were dead when he made harbor again? Agony crashed on his very being when he thought of present straits. It was now a little, combing sea flooded the forecabin of the tug, deluging her bridge and engine-room casing, and the smack of the brine recalled the seaman in Hawkins.

"Night's comin' down thick as pitch to wind'ard. Could hack holes in't!" he cried to the Mate in a raucous shout.

"Guess so! Say, the flood tide's draggin' her more'n two knots, for all her engines are shovin' her again' it. Where be?"

"Over the Chatham thirty-three fathom patch, I reckon, mebbe more to east'ard. Midships, there! Out lead. Grease her up good, Steffens. It's samples I'm wantin'."

The Mate, shaking the brine off his face, screeched something to his Skipper concerning "hoodlums there!" but a bellow of wind drowned his voice. Already Hawkins was bending over his tattered weather-cloth, strips of which were whipping round his legs. With more than menace in his deep voice he thundered at his grumbling deck-hands:

"Haul 'bout there, ye Gloucester haddocks! Out lead, an' smart 'bout it. D'ye hear! By G—d, I'm busy, I am!" And, breathing gustily in his outburst of wrath, he watched the reluctant men stagger out of shelter.

He turned to Hopkinson with an emphatic jerk of his right elbow towards the hands. "D—d sea-lawyers, fed up on stale blood-ends an' head-chowder. Short stores an' wet feet don't suit them, the lollies! All mouth an' no head!" he volleyed, turning his eyes to leeward to rest them. The night had fallen swiftly; small, blinding rain and spindrift drove in thick sheets before the blast.

"Less a quarter thirty-five fathom, mud an' small shell," pealed to the bridge.

"Hand up that tallow there," was the Skipper's shout. With extreme care he scooped the sludge and shell out of the heel of the lead. Slowly, as an expert, he ground the mud between his stumpy fingers, then thrust it under his nose.

"Chatham grounds, for certain," he cried, turning to the Mate. "We'll stand against the flood——"

"Flashin' lights to the sou'east, Cap'n," came the sudden hail to the bridge, and Hawkins leapt to starboard.

More to the south than southeast a few sparks of fire flashed out dim and mysterious. A little tip of light suddenly flickered up and, as it were, fell back into the darkness. In an eddy of the gale came a slight but sufficiently pronounced concussion.

"Something gone sky-high. Geewish!" roared the Skipper. "Sou'east, east a half, with her." And as he sprang back to ring his engines full speed ahead, Hopkinson had cast loose the wheel. Down to the investigation thrashed the Petrel, her deck-hands, lashed to lifelines, chipping the ice off her capstans and towing-horse, and her officers stubbornly staring into the stormy darkness.

Like two threads of fire a couple of rockets laced the wrack and sea-smoke, and in succession burst into golden stars. Down leapt the hurricane, twisting off the seas' white caps, hurling a wall of hail before it, and obscuring all vision. Hawkins cowered to leeward to regain his breath and wipe his eyes.

"Cunarder, by her sign'ls!" howled the Mate.

"Vessel I want," was bawled back, the Skipper clinging to the bridge-rail, for madly was the tug tossing. "Burn a blue light for'ard, there, an' a second one when the scud thins a bit."

Faint reports were now thudding out. At short intervals red lights were swooping upward, throwing still higher twelve ruddy balls, eyes of desperate appeal. It was as the Petrel momentarily paused before toppling down the curve of a thundering sea-hollow, her screws jigetting out of the water, that Hawkins first sighted the derelict liner: she was tumbling helplessly about, broadside on, among the breaking precipices of sea.

"Derelict!" cried the Mate. But the tightdrawn face of Hawkins never altered a jot, although in his heart he was shouting for sheer joy. His chance was come.

He yelled: "There's a crush o' wreckage. Looks as if she's been fightin' a bit; suthin' has gone under!" For in the crimson of the flares on board the liner the barrels of sea were now visible, ghostly, appalling in their size, and thickly studded with wreckage.

When the Fairfield saw the tug she switched on her masthead light and extinguished the flares. Hawkins stared at her, his left hand shielding his eyes from the electric's glare. Her aftermost boats were shot away, her upper-bridge, chart-house, and poop-deck battered out of shape. A ragged gap running obliquely into her belly was all that remained of her fine engine-room. Yet revenge for that shell of the Greif's had been secured by the Britisher's stern Q. F., for its projectile had pierced the commerce-destroyer in her forward magazine. Masses of entangled wreckage and a few bodies swaying about in the seaway bespoke her sudden end. Better had she tarried. Down southeast-by-east her consort, the cruiser Germania, was still hanging on in pursuit.

"Are ye backin' her in for a hand-line?" Hopkinson roared.

"Overmuch wreckage, screws 'ud foul," was the reply. "Stand by, lads, for life-buoy an' haulin'-line."

Suddenly was the monster ship swinging from side to side. She lurched deep to leeward, and the port rails of her upperdeck met the sea. On a massy swell breaking down abaft her amidships a foaming cascade poured over her afterdeck.

"By thunder, the seas'll sink her! Needs run in, Mate! Round her up, in under and for'ard a bit o' the bridge!" the Skipper roared as he rang his engines half speed astern.

As the Petrel edged into the lee of the derelict Hawkins's frowning eyes caught sight of men struggling along the deck towering overhead. His fingers tightened themselves round the handle of his engine-room indicator. Closely he watched the long, glistening wall of black steel lean abruptly towards the tug then slowly back to starboard. If wreckage jammed his screws and the Petrel loitered, that immense structure canting over again to the invincible impulse of the surges would crunch his vessel beneath it. With teeth clinched Hawkins thrust his boat backward. He was on his mettle now. "Stand by to catch hand-line!" was his shout to his dripping deck-hands. Cool and authoritative was his voice now; gone were the notes of worry and perturbation.

On board the Cunarder a bareheaded officer, clinging to her upper-deck rail, shouted impetuously, waving his arm. Then along the tug's deck hands shot out, and of the Fairfield's lines hurled through the air two were caught fast. Shrieking on her siren, the Petrel leapt away, just as, high over her stern, the liner's massive shoulder slanted with a sickening swing down into the pit of writhing waters.

"Heave in! Smartly with the hawser, boys!" was Hawkins's exultant roar. The next second he was wrinkling his brows, for the Cunarder's masthead light was suddenly shut off, indistinct hails came down the wind, and a lantern was waved from her bows to eastward, and a short string of signals twinkled forward.

"Hawser end's fast. What do she want?" bawled the Mate at the foot of the little bridge ladder.

"Can't say," shouted the Skipper, holding to the icy rail and gazing, all troubled, at the dim lights. "Tootin' too. Two short, one long. There she's 'gain. 'Standing into danger:' jist reckon I know that! She'll want us to hustle. A stiff pull!" And the Petrel hooted back reassurance.

A comber away to port foamed down and spouted shoulder deep across her deck, carrying away some fixings. As the uncontrolled liner veered about behind the walls of sea she dragged heavily on her, oft-times burying her stern in a smother of water. But the tug drew ahead. With flame twining along the thick coil of smoke pouring from her

red-hot funnel, steam screeching from her escape, and her tight little body well-nigh shaking itself to pieces, Hawkins drove her homeward. Only he wondered why the tow now showed not a single light.

III.

LIKE ice-cold water the high wind clashed against the face, almost stupefied the sense with cold, and made the eyes smart with the acerbity of its onset. Hawkins was gazing long and keen for the first glint of Chatham Light. The thick night, he thought, was obscuring it. About four bells of the first watch, or ten P.M., he began to look, now in trepidation, for the friendly streamers of Monomy Lighthouse. Had he failed to discern them amid the banks of low-flying cloud, he asked himself, or was he holding too far to the northward? Many years of experience and instinctive reasoning vigorously combated his doubts.

"Monomy Light sh'd be showin' up, Cap'n," cried Steffens, who had relieved the Mate at the wheel. "Reckon I know that by the flood from south'ard ketchin' 'er on 'er heel."

"Couldn't see hellfire through all this muck o' drift," roared Hawkins; "guess we're whereaway ye say."

In many a tempestuous night had his trained eye picked out the welcome blink of light faint against the piles of vapor. Yet he now strained his eyes in vain. Then of a sudden a shapless smear leapt out into the darkness, and the Skipper jumped back as if to escape a swinging blow.

"Down hellum," he screamed, "we're slap on Monomy!" With strung thews and iron wrists the two men shoved over the kicking wheel just as the Mate was scrambling headlong on the bridge.

Shouting out some words, he touched the panting Skipper on the shoulder. "Yes, we're clearin'! We're clearin'!" was Hawkins's cry as he watched the tow veer in his wake, and took comfort in the multitudinous, sharp thuddings from his hard-pressed engines.

"There's a craft o' some sort comin' up from south'ard," the Mate bellowed anew, and to attract attention he thrust his arm parallel with the Skipper's cheek.

It was as Hawkins marked the minute plumes of flame streaming out of the German's two funnels that she first let fly a shot with her bow barbette. To him the weak clap of the great gun ringing down on an eddy of the gale sounded the knell to greatingening hopes of high success.

Terrible was his cry: "It's war! It's war, men! The lights are all out!"

Once more did the liner hoist her string of lights. Sharply, urgently did she hoot, two short, one long, "You are standing into danger."

"By G—d, she knowed it!" clamored Hopkinson. "Her talkin' was all 'bout it. She's beat now! Ye'll cast off?"

"No!" thundered his Skipper, "take her in or sink, by G—d! Stand by the catch-block, Mate; not a man to knock it up. That liner is mine." And snatching the siren-pull he hooted back, "I understand." "A kind o' comfort to the Cunarder!" quoth he defiantly. "Below with you, Mate, an' up with that red, not the white un, box o' rockets. We'll fire them from the bridge. Mebbe they'll help."

About twenty minutes past ten o'clock, or five bells, aching eyes not so very far northward noted five mysterious balls of fire bursting into vivid stars changing white into blue and red successively spangle the inky night east by north a half. Their owners, the lookouts of No. 2 Unit, U. S. A., North Atlantic Squadron, straightway hailed their bridges. Thus it came, a minute later, that the Commodore—"Fightin' Kentucky," his men had dubbed him—scurried bareheaded from the chart-house out upon his seesawing after-bridge.

"Eh, what, what? Five balls, stars white into blue and red. Just so," he pumped to the Officer of the Watch out against the roaring of the wet-mouthed gale. "No! Private code, Nm, not not needed. That Boston tug has got the Cunarder in tow—enemy engaging. They're keen on getting certain despatch boxes! Send the Commander to me in the chart-house; he's just turned in."

Five minutes later the half-frozen signalmen on board the Brooklyn's three consorts were staring at her winking lantern and spelling out her orders. Soon the four vessels forming the unit fell into line astern. Then steering-buoys were hoisted in, head-lights shut off, sweaty-faced engineers let out their titanic monsters to the snicking of the bridge indicator ahead, and men with sleep still heavy on their eyelids were standing by for the bugle call to quarters. At seventeen knots the four armored cruisers smashed onward through the stormy night.

Less than two leagues to southward the tug was crawling over the hillocky waters in a last rally against adverse forces. Astern, her tow was now hove up on the crest of a sea, now almost hidden from sight, and the Germania, fast overhauling her, was pitching shell with increasing accuracy. The Cunarder, as if in the derision of deep despair, was cracking out with her popgun of an after 4.7-inch Q. F.

Hawkins brushed the water out of his eyes. "Diehards as they've aye been—the Old Breed! Them's the nation to fight for; by G—d, they are men!" he shouted joyously, as becoming a brave man, the witness of a brave combat. Yet to no end did he strain his eyes into the waves of darkness surging in over his bows. Not a signal answered his.

The indistinct crashing of the guns jarred against his nerves, overwrought with the worries and lack of sleep and all the hardships of the past few weeks. He jerked out his arm at the foe as if to smite her

to the bottom. "D—n ye," he yelled, "keep at it, keep at it, an' get it finished!"

A black-faced fireman, clad in ragged undershirt and pants, crawled up the bridge ladder and twitched at his sea-boots. He thrust down his head.

"Bunkers swep' clean?" he roared. "Then break up the fittin's, burn the boat out below, but keep her movin'. We sink or float with the tow."

His louring deck-hands, in shelter of the engine-room casing, heard his words and stared fiercely at one another. Were they to lose life as well as liberty?—was the "Ol' man" gone mad at losing the derelict? Exasperation, dismay, hunger, mutiny, clawed at their hearts. Their horse voices reached Hawkins's ear, and for an instant he held his breath.

Cursing madly, he leant over the bridge-rail. "Not a man touches hook or hawser!" he yelled in a fury. "She's mine, ye swine!"

Now the *Germania* had at last discovered her true opponent, and thought to try a long-sighting shot. That very instant, then, her projectile burst in the side of a surge a little to port; it threw up a head of brine that deluged the tug's deck. Such close acquaintance of the Real Thing made the deck-hands break control and act with immense promptitude.

One of them, a younger man than his fellows, ran aft to the towing-hook, from which the twanging hawser stretched over the seas astern. The greenhand hit the Mate under the left jaw and dropped him where he stood beside the hook. But the Skipper had swung his stiff body over the bridge-rail and reeled aft, with madness gleaming in his eye. As he felled the hand who was fumbling with swollen, numbed hands for the hammer to knock up the catch of the towing-hook, the *Germania's* next shell spun screeching over the seas.

It exploded overhead, just short of the stern of the tug. Her smoke-stack and engine-room casing was rent and torn, red-hot splinters zipped through the air. Moans and screams of agony burst from the hands; two of them slid sideways into the port scuppers, leaving smears on the wet deck; beside the towing-horse, Hawkins lay tumbled across the Mate, his side almost ripped to pieces.

It was now that ahead of the tug, to starboard a little, two gouts of fire spouted into the night, and pell-mell the 250-pounder A. P. shells whizzed out upon their deadly errand. For the Brooklyn had taken up the challenge.

As her unit filed past the enemy, their great guns opened a stunning crescendo. Monomy and Cape Cod Highlands heard the cracks of doom, and with bated breath gave ear, and wondered what terrible work was being effected. Then, suddenly, the sounds of firing ceased.

IV.

"Yes, it was smart!" said Galbraith the next afternoon to Doctor Thorne as they were leaving the hospital. "Boston's mighty proud of her man in there, and the States with the gunnery put in on the Deutscher. Thought she had a soft thing, she did, with the derelict and the Petrel! We knocked her out under three minutes, so the survivors say; she went down like a stone! Let's hope that's just how Uncle Sam will handle the lot of 'em! Hawkins in there'll get satisfaction for the biggest thing in salvage the world's ever seen. Yes, sir, 'tween one hundred thousand and one fifty thousand dollars'll tumble into his satchel—a mighty fine load! Certainly, I'll wire his wife again, saying he's getting along nicely. Glad I took your advice and got her away down South. She'll pick up now, you were saying. So well. Eh? Hawkins? Oh, I knew the shekels would come my way again, he is such a very 'clean' man. Not a spot of dirt on him, though he's all grit! I reckon he'll be a nine days' talk now. Queer old jade, Fortune!" And the two men turned into the excited street.

PURPLE LILACS

BY MINNA IRVING

A PRETTY maiden rose one day
Ere dawn began to glow,
And in the amber brook washed out
Her lilac calico.

All in the morning and the dew
A youth came riding by,
And saw her on a tall green bush
Hang up the dress to dry.

A look, a kiss, a word, away
They went by tower and town,
She followed him across the sea,
And so forgot her gown.
Look yonder by the garden gate,
Its flowery purple, see,
Is hanging where she left it yet,
Upon the lilac-tree.

THE SOLUTION

By Juliet Wilbor Tompkins

HER tragedy was ridiculous—that was the worst of it. Anyone recognizing it must laugh. Agatha herself laughed,—forlornly, perhaps, and even with wet cheeks at times,—but she never forgot its absurdity. If the fate that had forced the length of a young giant upon her had given her a giant's spirit as well, it would have been easier. But into her long frame had been thrust the heart of a little woman, all that was gay and caressing and dependent, that had been laughed back in vain since the days when they began to call her Jumbo and to admonish her that she was too big for "that." "That" was everything her instincts prompted. So poor Agatha learned to laugh and to go through life looking on—looking down, rather; for there were few men who did not wince and hastily find her a chair when they were left standing side by side. As a rule she was even quicker at finding the chair than they were—poor Agatha, to whom "just as high as my heart" was the sweetest description of a sweet-heart ever penned!

Sometimes, sitting alone in the dark, Agatha felt little—little enough to be picked up and held and rocked till the great aching loneliness was comforted: little enough not to be absurd. She was so far lost in this dream one dark November afternoon that Delafield caught a glimpse of it; for the maid had shown him in and switched on the lights, then gone off to find Miss Agatha, not seeing the long figure over by the fire. Some of the hungry little girl looked up at him for a bewildered instant: it was as though he had stepped out of the dream into the reality, and for the moment she forgot her defences. Then she laughed, rubbing the back of her hand across her cheeks.

"What is it?" he demanded, still standing over her.

"I was weeping for the death of the Cardiff Giant," she explained. "I think he would have been so nice for me to play with." People usually laughed when Agatha said things like that, but Delafield stared at her thoughtfully in disconcerting silence.

"Your life needs a solution, Agatha," he said finally.

"A solution of carbolic acid," she agreed. Delafield was never to be turned aside by flippancy.

"It could be solved in some way," he persisted. "It isn't satisfying you as it is." He glanced vaguely about the big, comfortable room. "Let me help you find a way." The strong instinct to heal that

had given him his profession made him dangerously sympathetic at times, and his voice easily became affectionate. Agatha had to remind herself sharply that she was half a head taller than he and an absurdity as well. She was always reminding herself of this with Delafield; yet it did so little good!

"Why bother?" she asked listlessly. "I know the remedy, anyway—to forget all about myself and think only of making the world better and happier. I can start in on it any moment I choose."

"Well, why don't you?" he asked seriously.

"Oh, good works are not in my line. You believe that if one can't be happy, one might as well be good." She rose restlessly and came over to the fireplace where he stood, momentarily defiant of her inches, though she had been careful not to rise when she greeted him. "Well, I sha'n't be, that's all."

"It is such nonsense to say you can't be happy," he exclaimed impatiently. His eyes fell on their images side by side in the mirror over the mantelpiece, and he quickly drew back a step or two, dropping to the arm of a chair. "Utter nonsense!" he repeated. Agatha turned away from the mirror with an odd little smile—the civilized equivalent for a scream of pain.

"Is it?" she said.

"My dear woman!"—Delafield spoke with increasing irritation,—“you have health, brains, money, freedom—no cares, no one to make difficult demands on you. Good Lord! Don't you realize that your lot is one in ten thousand?” Agatha was watching him steadily from the deep chair to which she had returned. Her face was impenetrable, though her hands were cold and trembling.

"No," she answered.

"Then I wish you could see a little of what I see every day in my work!"

"But can't you understand"—her clinched hand struck the arm of her chair and her starved love turned her voice to bitterness—"that I'd give up money and freedom and health—yes, and brains!—to be as other women are? Can't you realize that to be cut off from life is worse than anything life can do to you?" Their eyes met for a moment, then Agatha shrugged and smiled. "It is a sad case—poor little Agatha!" she commented. Delafield ignored the half-amused contempt of her tone, eying her gravely.

"I know a woman quite as tall as you," he said. "Only she is desperately poor and half sick—she sews. There are three little nieces that she supports. If you wanted to——"

"I might hunt her up and make her as miserable as I am—that would be entertaining," Agatha put in. He tore a leaf out of his notebook and wrote on it.

"There she is," he said, giving it to her.

"I don't want the thing," said Agatha.

Later, when she went to her room, the folded paper dropped out of her belt. She picked it up and stared thoughtfully at the name—Minnie Waite. Then she threw it down.

"Oh, I don't want unhappy, ugly people! I want to be happy myself! I want——" She broke off, her lower lip caught sharply between her teeth, her dilated eyes filling with slow tears. "It isn't fair!" she whispered passionately.

Agatha climbed the three long flights in a state of mingled defiance and shame.

"I suppose I shall find a bare room scrupulously neat and a grateful giraffe thanking heaven for her mercies," she muttered, frowning at the varied layers of smell she was obliged to traverse on her way up—cabbage, washing soap, and the deadly staleness of poverty and dirt. "If she has a pathetic cough, I'll hit her." And with this charitable intention Agatha knocked on the door of Minnie Waite, seamstress.

It opened, and for an instant the two women stood staring at each other. Their eyes were on a level.

"Well, my land! I didn't suppose there was another," said Minnie Waite impulsively. Then a sense of Agatha's clothes and general bearing brought an apologetic smile. "Well, now, I'm real rude," she added; "but you did kind of surprise me." Agatha laughed with sudden good temper, following her into a small room that was undeniably bare and neat.

"I don't wonder," she said, taking the proffered chair. "Dr. Delafield sent me to you, so I was prepared to find you tall. I wanted——"

"Say—ain't it awful!" Minnie Waite evidently could not come down to business yet. "Of course, you're not a lookin' thing like me—but don't it get in your way too, bein' so high?" She sat with a hand on either knee, as eager as a castaway on a desert island who suddenly finds a comrade in misfortune. The gaunt figure had no merciful arrangement of "lines" to take from its length, being condemned to a limp shirt and skirt that frankly parted company at the waist; the small head on top was not mitigated by fluffed-out hair and an adroit hat. Agatha, returning the honest gaze, felt a sudden quickening of her pulses.

"Yes, it is very much in my way," she admitted in a tone no one else ever heard: for once she was not taking it humorously. "It spoils everything."

"Don't it!" Miss Waite burst in. "Ain't it most as bad as a hump, now!"

"It's worse," exclaimed Agatha, "for a hump isn't funny!"

"Right you are!" Miss Waite struck her knee excitedly. "Them boys on the street—oh, my, my! Do people say things at you?"

"They whisper things and smile and think I don't see it."

"Oh, my, my! That's it. And no feller would ever ask me to dance or to walk with him, because it made him feel silly. And"—she hesitated, then it came with a rush—"th'r' ain't a man goin' as would ever have the nerve to marry me!"

"Nor me," murmured Agatha.

The two sat silent for a moment, then Miss Waite gave a long sigh.

"I wish you'd let me give you a cup o' tea," she said wistfully.

"I'd love it," said Agatha.

Three weeks later Agatha stood in her upstairs sitting-room humming to herself as she put the last glories on a little Christmas-tree. Three plump dolls seemed to give her especial satisfaction as she pulled out their skirts and straightened their curls. There was something different in her bearing, a touch of a new freedom. Delafield felt it instantly when he came in. He had not been there for a month—not since that last vaguely disquieting talk. He was prepared to find her somewhat aloof, a trifle cutting, in consequence, and was momentarily disconcerted by the cheerful cordiality of her greeting. Moreover, she did not drop into a seat or even lean down on a chair-back as she shook hands, facing him tranquilly from her greater height. If there was a shade of defiance in her erect head, he did not detect it.

"How well you look!" he exclaimed. Then he laughed teasingly. "Philanthropy evidently agrees with you, after all. Oh, Minnie told me: she couldn't talk of anything else."

"Well, I had to have some sewing done." Agatha spoke with good-humored resentment. "I suppose a long woman could do it as well as a short one!"

"And I suppose you were in need of three little orphan nieces to give a Christmas party to?" with an amused glance towards the tree.

"That isn't philanthropy, it's just an accident. If they hadn't been such dear, funny little things, I shouldn't have taken the slightest interest in them. Look, aren't these nice?" And she spread out three little cloaks. "Six-year, five-year, and three-year sizes," she explained. "And look here——"

Delafield began to feel resentful. He had come resigned to tacit reproach, but this frank, impersonal friendliness brought a sense of injury.

"You don't seem to have missed me," he said involuntarily. Agatha was reaching up to straighten a silver star, her long form outlined without palliation against the dark fir.

"Oh, yes, I did," she said seriously. "It is a whole month—I missed you very much."

"Very good of you," said Delafield sulkily. Never before had Agatha acknowledged to missing him, or even to noticing his absence. No doubt the change ought to be considered flattering, but somehow it was not.

"And now," said Agatha busily, "I must send you away, for I am going to drive down and get my party. I want to take them the cloaks—they will be so excited. Rosie is a perfect little peacock: you ought to see her with a white ribbon in her hair!"

Delafield held out his hand, looking keenly into her brightened face.

"What has happened to you?" he demanded. She smiled defensively.

"Why, I am a month older and wiser, I suppose—that is all. Come again soon," she added, and he went away wondering. The old Agatha had never urged him to come again soon.

"I'll bet there's a man in the case," he muttered uneasily.

Agatha stood where he had left her, the shadow of a past struggle darkening her eyes. The days that had followed his last visit had been the climax of a long bitterness; then she had climbed the dreary tenement stairs, and Minnie had unconsciously given her the clue to tranquillity. Out of the strange friendship that had sprung up between these two castaways had come her solution. Minnie accepted the worst: therein lay her strength. She stood to her full height, within as well as without. She knew her deprivation, yet had the courage to live with it openly. Agatha felt suddenly ashamed of her diet of false hope, ashamed of the artifices, the little plans to call attention from her ridiculous tragedy: ashamed even of her love and the dreams which indulged it. She too could accept the worst, and her reward had been an unlooked-for peace. Delafield's presence brought back a stirring of the hope she had never really believed in, but she thrust it away and, catching up the little cloaks, hurried down to the carriage. Their fat outlines set her smiling.

"How Rosie will strut!" she thought.

A lowering sky hung over the city, making the air heavy and close. There were more smells than usual on the three flights this afternoon, notably one of smoke. Agatha hurried up with her handkerchief to her face. No doubt some stove was protesting at extra Christmas labors. As she climbed the last flight a sound made her glance up towards the low skylight. "Is it rain or hail?" she wondered, but the blackened glass told nothing.

The three little girls received her with shy eagerness, while Minnie beamed a welcome over their scrubbed heads. Excitement rose to the

gasping point over the cloaks, and they lingered happily putting them on and lifting each child in turn to the bureau that she might see her glory full length.

"But listen—it must be simply pouring," exclaimed Agatha. Minnie glanced out of the window, which opened on a blind wall, then with a startled look in her eyes turned to the door. At that instant, as though she had opened the door on pandemonium, sudden screams came from below, a rush of feet, followed by a sound that swallowed all others, a swift roar filled with terrifying splinterings and crashings. They caught at the children and ran into the hall. The old building was burning like a torch, straight up through the centre, and they stood cut off by a wall of murky red flame.

"The skylight!" screamed Minnie, darting back for a chair. "Here—you're strongest!" Agatha sprang upon the chair, pushed away the glass with something Minnie put in her hand, and then, by grace of her height and the strength that comes in time of great need, she dragged herself up and through the opening into the merciful clear air. A quick breath for further strength, then she braced herself and thrust her long arms down into the swirling smoke for the terrified child Minnie was holding up to her. An instant later, blinded and gasping, she drew her burden to safety, and bent down for the next. The flames were leaping along the walls and closing in on the chair.

"Minnie, Minnie! Are you all right?" she cried, dragging the child up recklessly and turning back for Rosie. The answer came up to her strongly as she clutched the little arms,—

"I guess this is what we were made tall for, you and me!" Then there was a denser volume of smoke and the sound of a fall.

Agatha flung the child beside the others and groped down with one arm, the other across her face.

"Minnie, your hand! I can pull you up!" she cried. There was no answer. "Minnie, for God's sake, try!" Her voice rose to a scream. "Oh, won't someone help?"

"Here, get back!" A rough hand pulled her aside: the roof was suddenly swarming with helmeted men. Two disappeared into the black mouth of the skylight, while another gathered up the sobbing children and led them over the neighboring roofs. Agatha stood by the hole with clinched hands, heedless of peril. It seemed an eternity before the men reappeared, and someone caught her arm and dragged her away. A moment later with a mighty crash the roof fell in, showering the dark sky with sparks.

"And you are going to keep all three?" Delafield's tone was frankly amazed.

"Yes: why not? I have health, wealth, freedom—as you once re-

minded me. And I should like to do something for—Minnie. She did something very big for me, though she never knew it. She taught me—how to do without.” They were silent a moment, then she went on more lightly. “They are good stock, my babies. Education is all they need. Rosie takes to luxury like a duck to water!” She laughed at some recollection. “Don’t you think a nursery governess would be the thing for them now?”

“No doubt,” said Delafield absently.

“Clare really can sing, I believe,” Agatha went on. “Wouldn’t it be pleasant if she developed a good voice? Do you think six is too young to begin lessons?”

Delafield had walked to the window and was staring out into the February twilight.

“You seem to have found the solution, Agatha,” he said. His voice sounded dispirited. A shadow crossed her face, and for a moment all the old hunger crept into her eyes.

“I’m afraid it was poor Minnie who found that,” she said with a quick breath.

A soft fist beat against the lower panel of the door.

“Miss Agatha!” called an imperative voice. Agatha hurried across the room with a little laugh.

“Come in, Rosie girl,” she said, opening to a small figure with her arms full of doll. Delafield looked on restlessly while the child settled herself in Agatha’s lap and demanded that her doll be kissed too. Agatha’s arms tightened about the small body. Someway, she felt less and less the need of being little herself, these days.

“You’re going to be my baby, aren’t you, Rosie?” she asked, her cheek against the child’s hair. Her eyes were on Delafield, but they did not seem to see him: they were misty with tenderness and new thoughts.

“Well—I must be going,” said Delafield shortly. He left without further leave-taking and strode down the street, frowning; but after a few blocks his pace slackened, then faltered. At the next corner he quite paused, his eyes both bewildered and ashamed. Then he turned and started slowly back. Presently his eyes cleared, his pace quickened. He threw back his shoulders and drew a deep breath, walking like one who had found some good thing. When he neared Agatha’s house he started forward and ran up the steps.

WHAT MAN IS TO A BIRD

A STUDY OF HOUSE WRENS

By *Dr. Charles C. Abbott*

Author of "Travels in a Tree-Top," "The Birds About Us," etc.

A PAIR of wrens, in April, 1894, wandering in search of a nesting site, chattered incessantly over their misfortune that hours were being lost when otherwise they might be busy establishing a home. It is not improbable that during the preceding summer they were born near here, and, guided by circumstances of which man knows nothing, had this neighborhood in mind as the goal of their north-bound journey, for from October until April they spend their time far south of New Jersey. Be this as it may, here, now, were the wrens, and, happily, it was not long before their patient search was rewarded. Between the tin and the old shingles beneath that roofed one of my porches there was a space equal to their needs, and great was their rejoicing over the discovery. From that moment their singing distinctly changed. Fretfulness gave way to exultation, and their every utterance was so suggestive of happiness that it proved tonic and not toxic to all who heard it.

I wish to show that these wrens are methodical. For five years they arrived in April, on the twenty-third, the earliest date, or twenty-fifth. In 1900 on May 1, and the year following, a notably cold and stormy spring, on May 8. This year, 1902, they came on April 23, the day being clear and warm. That storms, adverse winds, and low temperature delay their arrival is apparent, but how it affects the date of their departure I do not know. Certain it is, an early spring here is not signalized by extra early arrival of our migratory birds. Foul weather far south of us may delay their start, just as it checks their progress, once under way, and renders somewhat uncertain the date of their arrival; but when I turn to my diaries of the past twenty-seven years the date of the wrens' appearance may be set down as April 25. More remarkable than their regularity of arrival is the manner of it. For days before the weather may have been perfect, the grass green, the apple-trees in bloom, but about the old porch there is silence profound. Afar off the field-sparrow tinkles a silver bell, the pee-wee warbles near the open shed, the swallows twitter in the bright blue sky, but the day is incomplete. Comes to-morrow, and with the first streaks of pearly

light in the east a rapid trilling of ecstatic song is heard; the world is fairly awake again. The wrens are here, and my summer would be complete had I no other company.

It is to be noted that if more than one year old, wrens come directly to their nesting site of the preceding summer. If it is still intact, all's well. There is no loitering in the neighborhood, nor has it ever happened, so far as my observation extends, that a single bird appears and a mate subsequently comes upon the scene. The pair arrive together. This is unquestionably true of my doorstep wrens of the past seven summers, and suggests that the marital tie is not voluntarily broken, whatever the birds' careers from August to April. The male may lose his mate, but he soon finds another, and the widowed bird may lose her lord, but she promptly mates again, and so one or the other keeps the old summer home in mind and it is never forsaken. It becomes a fixed feature of their lives.

A word here of a wren-box in my yard. It was placed upon a pole in the early spring of 1859, and was taken possession of that year and subsequently until 1891, when it was blown down. It was replaced in 1894 and has since been occupied each season. It has been the summer home of a pair of wrens for forty-one years in a period of forty-four.

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Much has been written of the mind that centres in the brain of a bee or an ant. The wren too has but a trifling brain when we consider its bulk, but from it flows many a suggestive train of thought. The career of the birds nesting in the roof of the porch was much the same year after year, and I will particularize only that of the season just drawn to a close. An understanding was soon established between these birds and myself, if not, indeed, with all the family. They took me, I am sure, into their confidence, and we became, so to speak, tenants in common. They occupied the porch; I, the house, and the right to the hall was in common.

Perhaps it can be shown, as it is certain to be asserted, that the wrens simply ignored our existence, but I am convinced, on the contrary, that they recognized me and held me as their friend. Certainly I was their daily companion. They never perched upon my shoulder or took food from my fingers, but they were constantly within arm's length and sometimes nearer. They were not afraid, in the ordinary sense, and if holding that discretion is the better part of valor, did not exhibit the belief that in myself there might lurk a possible danger to themselves. This was my comforting thought, and, acting upon it, I was drawn to them daily, and never to my discouragement were they withdrawn far from me.

The first brood came from the nest a few days too soon, and great

was the commotion that followed. The young birds were too weak upon the wing to avoid danger. I boldly declare I believe I was appealed to. The parent birds perched on the sill of my study window and sang as they had not done before. The marked difference from their ordinary singing attracted my attention. When I went out of the door their excitement visibly increased. I thought they would actually alight upon me. I saw the trouble and proceeded to remedy it. I caught four of the young birds, all that I could find, and immediately the old birds were more at ease. Placing a ladder against the porch, I carried the nestlings back. Every movement of mine was closely watched. I was followed every step I took, and when I replaced the young birds the parents were within a foot of my hand. Then, such singing! It seemed unmistakable that I was accepted as a veritable friend in need, and so a friend indeed. After this incident the wrens were even more tame.

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A few weeks passed, and I was again called upon to render these wrens assistance. The entrance to the nest had become too large for their needs, and a pair of English sparrows had discovered the fact. The rotten wood had so far crumbled away that the latter birds could pass in and out. This they attempted, and a battle royal was begun. The singing of the wrens was noticeably loud, incessant, and suggestive of some unusual happening. I was attracted by it and saw the cause of all the trouble at once. Again I seemed to be appealed to. The wrens distinctly flew to me, singing while on the wing, and then darting viciously after the intruding sparrows. I took a strip of thin wood, bored an inch auger-hole in it, and prepared to place it before the old opening to the nest. Setting the ladder again in position, I was now closely followed by the wrens. They clearly comprehended what I was about to do. They did not leave me for an instant. I tacked the bit of wood in front of the nest and added a perching-stick. The wrens stood upon the porch roof near by and fairly danced with glee, and before I was again upon the ground and the ladder removed they were passing into and out of the nest without a moment's hesitation. I never heard such exultant singing. It was piercingly shrill.

◆

I have not exaggerated. I can offer no other explanation of what I saw and heard. But have I overstated the implied intelligence of these little birds? When we recall what has been noted of dogs, bees, and ants, I do not think it possible that my conclusions are unwarranted. Still, there are endless difficulties confronting us when the subject of animal intelligence is broached. It would seem at times as if the longer we look, really the less we see. We advance, step by step, it is true, but the goal seems to recede faster than we approach it. This same goal is,

after all, but a fancied point in space, and as there is no limit to the latter, how can there be an end to our journey in the search of what we call the truth?

The exodus of the first brood was unattended by any unusual incident. The world before them, the young wrens voluntarily set forth upon their lives' journey or were driven to do so. Be that as it may, it was an orderly proceeding so far as I could determine, as no young birds were to be seen in the neighborhood. But a few days passed and I noticed that the parent birds were house-cleaning. Many a twig and little feather was carried to the entrance and dropped upon the ground, and new material was gathered. This was but the work of two days, I think, and then the old, orderly way was resumed, and never a day-long hour but was brightened by a song.

Very different in early August, when the second brood were old enough to fly. Then there was much excitement. Parents and offspring were in constant consultation, and they gathered continually on the nearest trees. The night of the eighth was spent in the old nest—on the morning of the ninth every bird had disappeared.

There is nothing strange in animals seizing upon facts and gradually reaching to their full significance. Man does this continually, and many a marvellous invention is but the gradual unfolding of a fact and utilization of what it really stands for. In a smaller way such ratiocination cannot be denied my doorstep wrens. Year by year they learned that the porch stood for something more than a nesting site. They knew it was a resting-place also for myself, and that my presence kept aloof the persecuting sparrows and every prowling cat. What man is from an animal's standpoint is yet to be determined,—if, indeed, determinable,—but what I stood for in the minds of the wrens is to me quite apparent. They clearly accepted me as their friend and protector. Needless to add, they were never disappointed.



THE SUN CAME OUT AGAIN

BY W. H. BELFORD

AFTER long days of rain and gloomy weather
The sun came out again; the roof of gray
Scattered and fled, and vanished quite away;
Sun, sky, and earth made merry all together.

In the green groves the birds trilled forth together,
Song-sparrow, thrush, and robin sang amain;
My heart sang too, "The sun came out again
After long days of rain and gloomy weather."

LAVENDER

By *Lizette Woodworth Reese*

Author of "A Branch of May," "A Quiet Road," etc.



OLD JOHN DAVIS came along Southern Lane in the early dusk and stopped in front of the house nearest the churchyard. He stood a moment and stared across at it.

"I can smell them bushes out here," he said. "My! ain't they sweet!"

The crickets were making a good deal of noise in the short-cropped grass.

"How they do go on!" said the old man. "They make a body think of things."

He crossed to the gate and entered. A long, straight path led up to the little, sloping-roofed, shutterless house. It faced the rich yellow west, and its windows were the color of those of a cathedral. Thin eddies of dust floated about him as he went. A certain strict, sweet odor filled the air. It was so still, except for the insects, that his steps gave out an almost solemn sound upon the gravel.

"Is that you, Mr. Davis?"

He came to a halt: "Yes, it's me, Mis' Field."

A slender old woman came around the corner of the house and eyed him distantly for a moment. Her face was small and dark; her eyes were dark. A certain sustained breathlessness, as though that of expectancy, hung about her. "I seen you coming," she said briefly; "I guess you come for the lavender."

"Yes, Mis' Field, that's what I want." He followed her back to a grassy space hedged in on two sides by tall lavender bushes, brimming with their June spears of exquisite bloom. It was a cloistered spot, almost surrounded as it was by this delicately colored wall. In the middle of it stood a rude little table, partly covered with the blossomed stalks, some in scant bundles, some in loosened heaps. A ball of twine lay in the midst.

"Ain't it sweet?" said old John Davis. He sniffed and sniffed.

"How many you want?" asked Mrs. Field, pointing towards the bundles.

"I want six dozen, Mis' Field."

"I can't give you more'n five. I'm selling some myself this year. The minister's wife's buying it for her sheets."

He waved his hand towards the bushes: "You've got lots there in the hedge."

"I ain't going to touch another bit—not a speck! I'll give you five dozen and a half."

He sat down on a wooden chair by the door. "I wish you'd give me or sell me a root, Mis' Field. They're always asking about 'em in market. Susanna's just tired of answering."

She was coming towards him with her arms full of her scented wares. "I'm not going to dig up one of them bushes," she declared. "You and Susanna could have had a hedge as good as this if you'd kept at it. It can grow anywheres in Maryland."

"We don't have any luck with them cuttings you give us, Mis' Field. They won't grow, or else they come up fine and strong, and pindle down in the winter. It makes Susanna mad as fits."

"It ain't my fault," said Mrs. Field. "Here's your five dozen and a half." She put the blossoms into his upstretched hands. "You ask five cents a bunch for them stalks—you hear?"

"We always do," said the old man. "Lord, ain't they sweet!" He thrust his withered face down into them.

Mrs. Field looked at him with a curious hesitancy. "What kind—what kind of market did you have yesterday, Mr. Davis?" There was a secret and faltering eagerness in her voice.

"Oh, middling, middling. Folks want stuff for nothing these days. They want you to grow it, and dig it up, and cart it to town, and then just throw it at 'em when you get there. And if you ain't willing, they're ready to sass you. Them hucksters get all the profit."

The woman's face grew wistful in the waning light. "Nobody could sell better'n me when I wanted to," she said.

"That's so, Mis' Field. Susanna and me were just talking about it. We all thought it was a better chance for the rest of us when you give up your stall. How long ago was that, Mis' Field?"

"Ten year and more, Mr. Davis."

"It was that year we had them three hard frosts handrunning," said he; "it was when—when——"

"You mean when my Jean went away," said Mrs. Field.

The old man was abashed. "I didn't mean to bring up any of your troubles, Mis' Field," he blundered on.

She stood silent. The crickets seemed to grow louder and louder.

"Well." He rose and moved slowly away out of the sweet-smelling space. "Mis' Field!"—he had halted and was looking back,—“Mis' Field, why won't you sell us one of them lavender-roots?"

A flash like that of fire passed over her dark, tense face. And yet it seemed long before she spoke. "It's Jean," she said at last.

"Jean!" he said hazily.

"Yes, Jean, Jean!" She was fierce and remote and appealing all in one. "Jean, Mr. Davis! She helped to plant some of them eleven year ago." Then she seemed to falter beneath his wondering eyes. "And when she comes back—when she comes back, Mr. Davis, I want things to look like they did when she went."

"Yes, yes, Ma'am," he said.

"I feel sure she's coming back, Mr. Davis."

"Yes, Ma'am, maybe she will."

That flash came again. "She'll come back alive, or she'll come back dead, John Davis. I know she will!"

He lumbered away through the dusk without another word. She returned to her little table, and, taking up the loosened lavender, handful by handful, began tying it into bundles of uniform length and thickness. She worked mechanically, her fingers trembling a little. The half light, the strict odor, the memory-throbbing hour, were filled with the daughter that had faded out of her meagre life like the morning smoke. What mattered the rumor regarding her that still floated about among the narrow country folk after these long years? To her she was virgin still. To her she was young, kind, triumphant, set on the borders of perpetual spring.

"Oh Lord!" said Mrs. Field. It was half a cry, half a groan. She looked up. A glimmer of white struck her eye. "Who's that coming down through the graves?" she asked.

"Mrs. Field! Mrs. Field!" called a voice across the palings.

The old woman came slowly forward.

"I've just slipped down to smell your lavender," said the minister's wife. "How I love it!" She held her girlish face towards the delicate lilac bloom. "I wonder if you won't sell me just one little root, Mrs. Field. I'd like to try it in my garden."

"I ain't going to part with one of them roots, Mis' Bowden. But I'll give you some cuttings, if you want me."

"Oh, thank you. I'm just wild to do something with that garden. We've been here a month, and we haven't seen a flower in it yet. It's nothing but grass and bushes. The last pastor was a widower." Her little, tinkling laugh sent a sudden music through the dusk. "There are three laurel-bushes and six althea-bushes and a whole side full of rosebushes that look as peaked as though the chickens had been after them. And the buds are all streaked with brown, like marble cake." She laughed again. "How long has that hedge been growing, Mrs. Field?"

"Some of it's twenty year old, maybe more. The last I planted was eleven year ago."

Mrs. Bowden drew a long breath. "How dear and old-timey and straggly it is! Now if my cuttings grow,—and you must show me how

to manage them, Mrs. Field,—I'll be the proudest woman in the world. And when you sit in church and smell the blossoms, they'll be so sweet you'll think it your own lavender, and not mine at all."

"I don't go to church," said Mrs. Field.

On one side of the fence rose the graves, very distinct in the clear yellow of the west, and beyond them the church, distinct and dark. On the other stood the narrow old house, a side window one sheet of quiet radiance. The hedge looked dim and cloud-like, and seemed to float away into the softened space. Beyond the hedge stretched acre after acre of market-garden, whose already furrowed levels were filling with phantom mist, and out of this ghostliness was blown a primeval aroma that could be subtly detected under that of the lavender.

"I don't go to church," repeated Mrs. Field. "I got tired of hearing preachers talk about Mary Magdalenes and the thief on the cross. You'd think there was only two kinds of commandments that ever got broke."

Mrs. Bowden looked rather vague. "I guess everybody gets tired of preaching sometime," she said. Then she laughed. It seemed easy for her to do so.

"Most all my folks were shouting Methodists," said Mrs. Field. "Mr. Field was too. You could hear him down on the pike. But I ain't got any use for them now. They worry too much about sinners. They're plenty where he's gone now." She waved a hand towards the churchyard.

"I've heard he was a good man," said Mrs. Bowden.

"He could have been worse," said Mrs. Field.

In the sudden wind that drove along the garden spaces it seemed as though the whole of life went by in one great breath of rich, heart-breaking, poignant odor. It was memory and expectation and the pulsing core of all. Then silence. A star or two had come out.

"They're calling me," said Mrs. Bowden. "Good-night, Mrs. Field. I want my lavender bunches to-morrow, mind you. Four bunches to each sheet. Can you remember?"

"I'll have them ready, Mis' Bowden. Good-night."

Her neighbor gone, Mrs. Field stood a moment gazing out into the churchyard. If she had put her hand over the sunken palings, she could have touched her husband's tombstone. He had been a hard man. A certain rigidity of conduct had brought him an enviable reputation, which, after his death, had ripened and mellowed into that of the saint. Some fleeting recollections of their early youth, when they had both lived away from the neighborhood, came into his wife's mind. Then some later and keener ones that roused and stung her. All at once she spoke out sharply. "You helped to drive her to it, John Field, and then, just like a man, you had to go and die, and leave me to bear it."

Her voice rang out, pelting the air as though with stones. "Sinner, sinner, sinner!"

She went back to her humble task of tying the lavender stalks, but the light grew dimmer, the yard began to melt away into the gathering darkness, and presently she flung her apron over the unfinished heap on the little table and looked around and about her. "I wonder if she'll come," she said. An added breathlessness took possession of her. Her body appeared to strain forward in an attitude of almost painful watchfulness. "I wonder if she'll come to-night," she repeated.

A slight sound reached her ears.

"It's that curtain flapping up in her room," she said. "I guess I'd better go up and fix it."

It was a small, low-roofed room, with a bare floor and whitewashed walls, so clean withal that its cleanliness seemed like a kind of poetry. Strips of faded homemade carpet lay across the uneven boards. The bed was covered with a white knitted quilt. On a table alongside sat a fluted glass filled with blossomed lavender. The lighted candle Mrs. Field held in her hand showed all this and much more. The whole chamber was full of memories, regrets, visions, the dreams that come but once and are so quick to fleet away; of passions, and longings, of spring-time echoes and odors, of gay, lilting, immortal youth. The dignity, the illusiveness of a secret was in the air.

"Oh Lord! Oh Lord!" cried old Mrs. Field. A tremor passed over her. She closed the window with unsteady fingers and went downstairs.

Out in the lane each tree was a soft, blurred black, behind which stretched the distant and exquisite west. The road itself was a half-blotted track. There were the old, shrill noises in the hidden grass.

Mrs. Field came out to her front-door. "Jean," she called softly.

It seemed to her, so sharp was her longing, that the girl must rise up before her out of the brooding dark. All her hopes, her desires, her schemes, her ambitions, had resolved themselves into that one cry of her forlorn heart. She had given up church, market, friends, all the petty but absorbing threads of a country life, and lived eleven lonely years in a lonely house that she might be at home whenever Jean returned. Against that hour the chamber had been kept ready, the garden pruned and tended in the old fashion. There should be nothing new, nothing accusing and strange.

"Jean," and her voice struck into the dusk with a passion that was like a flame, "if you're alive or if you're dead, come back!"

A step came faltering along the lane outside.

"Jean!"

There was no answer.

Old Mrs. Field went swiftly down the gravel path, her pale skirts floating about her like clouds.

"Jean!" She was speaking as though to a very little child. "Do you smell the lavender? There's hundreds of bunches on them old bushes. I've put some up in the crinkly glass you like so, and set it by your bed. Everything's the same, Jean, the quilt and the chairs and the rugs you and me made."

The step began to draw nearer.

"I knew you'd come back, Jean, I've been waiting. There's only you and me now. Your father's dead."

The gusts came and the boughs rocked against the far golden sky. The stars throbbed. The crickets were enough to break one's heart.

"Jean! Jean!"

There was no answer.

Mrs. Field ran out into the road, groping blindly before her with outstretched hands.

"Jean, do you hear me? do you hear me? I want to tell you something. I'm not any better than you, not one bit better. Jean, listen. Don't you know me and your father had to get married, and that was the reason he was hard on me, though you were his child as well as mine? I won't throw up old times to you, Jean. Don't you believe me? Jean! Jean!"

A halting figure came out of the pale darkness and swayed towards the garden gate.

"Jean!" cried old Mrs. Field.



CHIMES

BY WILL McCOURTIE

CHIMES! Oh, the chimes!
 Oh, the softness and the silveriness of chimes!
 The limpid and the liquid running rhymes,
 Hanging so vibrant in the crystal clear,
 Sun-warmed, and hushful Sunday atmosphere!
 From temple-top and spindling spire
 They flow and follow and float,
 White-winged higher and higher,
 Until each pealing, healing note
 Makes home at last, borne heaven high,
 The very stars of music's sky,
 Softened and singing silver chimes!
 Chimes! Chimes! Chimes! Chimes!

THE BLAST OF THE TRUMPET

By Ella Middleton Tybout

Author of "Ananias of Poketown," etc.

"DE DAID," asserted Aunt Janty Gibbs solemnly, "con-tin-ually do walk."

"Does dey walk all tuh wunst?" inquired her grandson, Gabriel Gibbs, a youth with an unquenchable thirst for information on all subjects.

"No, chile," returned his grandmother with a superior air, "dey walks sometimes in twos an' sometimes in threes, but mos'ly dey walks alone in de night-time."

"Dey's a time comin', Aun' Janty, when dey's all gwine tuh walk tuh wunst," remarked Brother Eli Wiggins with conviction.

"Whut yo' 'ludin' tuh, Brothah Wiggins, whut yo' 'ludin' tuh?" asked Aunt Janty as she hospitably replenished his cup, while Gabriel improved the opportunity to slip unnoticed from the room.

"Dey's a time comin'," he replied, pouring the steaming tea into his saucer, "when ole Gabriel am gwine tuh soun' de note on he hawn good an' loud. Den de graves am gwine tuh bus' open an' de daid come fo'th tuh walk up an' down in de worl', tuh an' fro in hit. Y-a-a-s, Aun' Janty, dat's so."

Brother Wiggins paused and looked solemnly at his hostess.

"Aun' Janty," he said, his voice sinking to a sepulchral whisper, "dat time ain' so fuh off ez mos' folks b'lieves."

Aunt Janty paused, teapot uplifted, and looked at her visitor.

"Whut yo' mean, Brothah Wiggins?" she whispered in return, glancing apprehensively about her.

"One night," resumed Brother Wiggins impressively, "I up an' dream a dream; y-a-a-s, Aun' Janty, dat's whut I done, same ez de wise men of ole. I hyah de trumpet soun' de las' trump, an' I seen de daid come tumblin' outen dey graves."

"Laws!" ejaculated Aunt Janty.

"I done dream de same dream three nights," continued Brother Wiggins, "an' den I hyah a Voice; hit done tell me de time am come fuh de eend o' de worl', an' hit done significate de night ole Gabriel gwine tuh blow he hawn."

Brother Wiggins paused to note the effect of his words.

"Aun' Janty," he said dramatically, "*dis am de night*."

"Is yo' sho', Brothah Wiggins, is yo' sho'?" questioned Aunt Janty in awe-struck tones.

Mr. Wiggins nodded.

"I's gwine tuh tell de Faithful 'bout hit at de sperience meetin' tuh-night," he responded, "an' I's gwine tuh tell de sinnahs 'tain' no use tuh lay low nohow, 'caze ole Satan he know whuh tuh look. Yo' ain' got no call tuh be skeert, Aun' Janty, yo' ain'. Jes' keep close tuh me when de time draws nigh, an' yo' kin slip in undah de tails o' my coat. I thinks too much of yo', Aun' Janty, tuh let yo' try hit by yo'se'f, dat's whut I does."

Aunt Janty looked much worried as her visitor departed, and made ready to follow him to the church of Little Bethel in a very perturbed state of mind. So troubled, indeed, was she that she entirely forgot her grandson, leaving him to take his chances for weal or woe alone and unprotected; she also overlooked the fact that her ancient father remained dozing in his armchair with only the shelter of a patchwork quilt to screen him from the eye of the Recording Angel.

"Wisht I knowed whutha tuh b'lieve him er not," she ejaculated, her hand on the latch of Little Bethel.

Now Gabriel Gibbs, when he left the house of his grandmother, repaired to a neighboring woodpile and, putting two fingers in his mouth, whistled shrilly three times. In prompt response to the signal sooty urchins of all sizes stole quietly one by one from the surrounding houses and assembled at the rendezvous. Gabriel eyed them severely.

"Is yo' gwine tuh play Injun in dem clo'es?" he inquired sarcastically.

His followers intimated that they had no others.

"Git sheets," commanded the leader, "an' wrop 'em roun' yo' bodies, an' take hatchets, er somethin', in yo' han's."

"Whut yo' gwine tuh wrop roun' yo' own body?" demanded Alonzo Burris in return.

"Go git yo' sheets," replied Gabriel loftily, "an' wotch fuh me tuh come outen de back do'. I's de Chief, I is, an' I knows how Injuns does."

Gabriel stole quietly back to the house, having observed his grandmother depart for church, and softly approaching his slumbering ancestor removed the patchwork quilt from his aged legs. It was an easy matter to pluck from Aunt Janty's turkey-tail fan its longest feathers and place them in his own hair, also to take possession of the tin dinner-horn which hung behind the kitchen door. A can of red paint stood in the washshed, and he liberally daubed it upon his round, ebony counte-

nance with surprising results, and then rejoined his followers enveloped in the aforesaid quilt.

"Now," said Gabriel to the ghostly band of white-draped Indians, "we's gwine tuh lay down in de hay-fiel' behin' de graveyahd an' wait twell de time come tuh set de bresh-heap on fiah. 'Lonzy Burris, whut yo' doin' wid dat laddah?"

Alonzo shifted his burden to the other shoulder but declined to reply, and Isaiah Bristow appearing on the scene armed with a pitchfork, the band of warriors proceeded to the hay-field to camp there until it should be time to set fire to the brush-heap.

Brother Wiggins concluded his impassioned discourse and resumed his seat. He had spoken for fully two hours and, with hymns and prayers introduced by various members of the congregation, the service had lasted until almost eleven o'clock. An air of excitement pervaded the assembled company and they lingered in the building, apparently unwilling to venture from beneath the sheltering roof of Little Bethel. Brother Noah Hyatt rose to make a few remarks:

"Meh brothahs an' meh sistahs," he began solemnly, "yo' done hyah whut Brothah Wiggins say. De eend o' de worl' am comin' dis hyah night; de good folks am gwine tuh flap dey wings in glory, an' de bad folks tuh roas' on de gridiron o' ole Satan."

"A-a-men," ejaculated Mr. Samuel Johnson fervently.

Mr. Hyatt looked severely at the speaker.

"Whut yo' givin' thanks fuh, Mistah Johnsing?" he inquired politely. "Is yo' sho' whuh yo's gwine? 'Membah de one-eyed shoat whut Uncle William Staffo'd los' so pow'ful queeah; 'membah de jimmy-john undah yo' baid; 'membah de fiddle yo' done play so frequent; an' 'membah dat pack o' cyahds in de pocket o' yo' blue ovahalls."

And Brother Johnson shrank back in his corner, silent and alarmed.

"Whuh, oh, whuh, am de good ole Moses?" sang Sister Roxy Bristow in her high soprano voice.

"Safe now in de Promised Land," immediately responded the deep, sweet contralto of Sister Rebecca Brown, and Little Bethel rocked on its foundations as the entire assembly shouted the refrain:

"By an' by we's gwine tuh jine him,
By an' by we's gwine tuh jine him,
By an' by we's gwine tuh jine him,
Safe now in de Promised Land."

"Ez de Day of Jedgmint am so nigh," resumed Brother Hyatt when he could make himself heard, "I axes yo' ef yo' all don' b'lieve we bettah wait de soun' o' de trumpet right hyah in L'il Bethel, wid song an' prayah?"

The Blast of the Trumpet

"Whuh, oh, whuh, am Wres'lin' Jacob?" struck up Sister Roxy Bristow in reply, and again the night-air resounded with the refrain.

"Come wid me," said Brother Wiggins, leading the way to the door and beckoning his flock to follow. "Out in de graveyahd am de place tuh wotch an' wait. Come wid me."

And with faltering steps and apprehensive glances his congregation obeyed him.

Brother Wiggins and his flock grew rather silent as they assembled in the churchyard and cast stealthy glances at the dark shadows and patches of pale moonlight.

"Sam'l Johnsing," said Brother Hyatt at last, pointing towards the corner where reposed the two former wives of that gentleman, "behol' Sistah Liza Johnsing an' Sistah Lucy Ann Johnsing; dey's bof gwine tuh raise up an' claim yo' fuh sho'. Which one does yo' b'long tuh, Brothah Johnsing?"

"He b'long tuh me," said Mrs. Johnson No. 3, laying a convincing hand upon his shoulder.

"De Lawd on'y know who I does b'long tuh, anyhow," said the unhappy Samuel, his knees knocking together under him.

"Brothah Hyatt," admonished Mr. Wiggins, "am yo' own life 'thout no spots? 'Membah de yallah meule yo' done sole tuh ole Aun' Judy."

And Brother Hyatt became strangely silent.

"Glory, glory, hallelujah!" shouted Sister Roxy Bristow suddenly; "gwine tuh see Fathah Abraham dis hyah night. Glory!"

"Gwine tuh jine de cherrybim an' pick de golden haphs," chanted Aunt Martha Young.

"Gwine tuh sing evahlastin'ly; ain' gwine tuh wuck no mo'," added Sister Rebecca Brown with evident anticipation.

"Aun' Janty," said Brother Wiggins, "whut yo' studyin' 'bout, Aun' Janty?"

"When de graves do open," said Aunt Janty abstractedly, "den I's gwine tuh see meh yallah gal Mandy ag'in."

"So yo' is, Aun' Janty, so yo' is. Praise de Lawd!" said Brother Wiggins fervently.

"Laws," returned Aunt Janty regretfully, "I's mighty sorry I didn' put on huh blue silk frock when I laid huh away. She gwine tuh look pow'ful funny traipsin' roun' hyah wid huh shroud tuh kivvah de front an' nawthin' 'tall in de back."

"Ole Uncle Joe ain' gwine tuh like hit nohow 'caze we done sent him tuh glory dat-a-way ef he run ag'in' Brothah Wiggins walkin' de golden streets in he shiny silk hat an' black pants," rejoined Aunt Martha Young in troubled accents.

"Oh," exclaimed Mary Jane Finney suddenly, "I's a sinnah! I's a sinnah! Git me in, Brothah Wiggins, git me in somehow."

"Me too, Brothah Wiggins, me too!" shouted an excitable sister from the rear, pushing her way closer to the front, and Brother Wiggins narrowly escaped suffocation as his congregation crowded anxiously around him.

"Yo' done promise me yo' coat-tail," asserted Aunt Janty Gibbs, taking possession as she spoke. "Ef yo' gits in, I gits in too."

"De othah tail b'longs tuh me," announced Aunt Martha Young. "Me an' Aun' Janty done stay by yo' when all de res' tuck an' flop ovah tuh Zion; 'membah dat."

The knees of Brother Wiggins trembled obviously, in spite of his efforts at self-control, as the hour of midnight approached, and he huddled in the shadow of Little Bethel with his trembling followers and waited the blast of the last trumpet. And the moon shed its soft light impartially upon them and upon slumbering Poketown, unconscious of its doom. It also shone upon the amateur Indians, reposing comfortably upon fragrant haycocks, utterly indifferent to the day of reckoning surely in store for them, whether justice was administered by St. Peter or by their earthly guardians.

Gabriel awoke from his nap and jumped to his feet. It was quite time to arouse his band and begin operations, for he yearned to see the pile of brush in flames and to dance about it the war-dance so diligently practised upon the tow-path. So he felt of the feathers in his kinky little poll, and draped the patchwork quilt again about his person. Then, standing erect upon his haycock, his whole energy concentrated upon his task, Gabriel blew three blasts upon his horn.

"De las' trump!" gasped Brother Wiggins.

"Lawd ha' mercy!" shrieked Sister Rebecca Brown.

"Speak up, Brothah Wiggins, speak up," exhorted Aunt Janty, "show Mistah Gabriel whuh de righteous am. Speak up loud."

Brother Wiggins struggled vainly to extricate himself from her detaining hand, evidently believing that self-preservation is indeed the first law of nature.

"Leggo!" he commanded, clutching wildly at the tails of his coat, which were firmly anchored from the rear.

Shadowy white figures appeared in the distance and silently advanced.

"De daid am riz!" ejaculated Brother Wiggins, falling face downward upon the ground; Aunt Janty Gibbs and Aunt Martha Young likewise prostrated themselves, the one on his right hand, the other on his left.

"Ef yo' wants me," said Mr. Samuel Johnson excitedly, addressing Mrs. Johnson, "yo's got tuh hol' on tight. Lucy Ann am riz."

"G'way, niggah," she returned, twitching her skirt from his grasp,

"I's got 'nuff tuh do tuh take cyah o' meh'se'f; ain' gwine tuh tote yo' nohow."

The figures became rather more distinct, and the light of the moon fell directly upon the many brilliant colors in the patchwork quilt which enveloped Gabriel Gibbs.

"De angils f'om heav'n am come down," whispered Sister Roxy Bristow. "Yondah's Joseph; I knows him by he coat. Glory! Glory!"

Aunt Janty cautiously raised her head, but her grandson had passed and was replaced by Alonzo Burris, who still clung to his ladder.

"Praise Gawd f'om who all blessin's flows!" she exclaimed. "Mistah Jacob done fotch he laddah teh he'p us climb up."

"Fathah Abraham," exclaimed Mrs. Samuel Johnson suddenly, "whuh is yo', Fathah Abraham? I's done ready an' waitin' tuh res' on yo' buzzom."

"Whut yo' talkin' 'bout?" interrupted her husband; "dis hyah am de buzzom fuh yo' tuh res' on. I goes whuh yo' does; I's yo' husban', I is."

"'Tain' no easy restin'-place, yo' buzzom ain'," returned his wife scornfully. "I's gwine ovah to Fathah Abraham, I is. Yo' kin res' wid Lucy Ann."

And a dull, ashen hue overspread the countenance of Mr. Johnson.

Gabriel and his band of warriors marched silently in single file across the back of the churchyard to the brush-heap in the adjoining field; they then produced matches and set fire to it in various places. The wood was old, rotten, and very dry; it therefore burned quickly and fiercely, much to the delight of the incendiaries. A row of tall pine-trees formed a dark background against which the flames shone with a lurid and startling effect.

"De gates ob Hell am open wide!" shrieked Mary Jane Finney, pointing a trembling finger at the blazing pile.

Brother Wiggins raised himself slowly to his knees; Aunt Janty Gibbs and Aunt Martha Young did likewise. They were firm in their determination to reproduce his slightest movement, thus insuring salvation.

"Pray, Brothah, pray," entreated Sister Rebecca Brown frantically.

Casting aside the restraining sheets, the Indians started to perform the amazing and intricate dance invented by their Chief, giving vent to their war-whoop at frequent intervals.

"De howls o' dem in tormint," said Brother Hyatt unctuously.

"Pray, Brothah, pray," urged Sister Rebecca Brown again.

Brother Wiggins raised a shaking hand towards the sky; immediately the hands of Aunt Janty and Aunt Martha flew upward also, as though moved by invisible springs.

"Git tuh prayin'," commanded Brother Hyatt sternly. "Whut we

been payin' yo' sellery fuh dis long time ef yo' ain' no use now? Git tuh prayin'."

Brother Wiggins tried to comply, but his tongue clove to the roof of his parched mouth and speech was impossible. Great drops of perspiration stood out upon his clammy brow and he mechanically drew him arm across it; the foreheads of the ladies between whom he knelt were straightway mopped also.

The terrified sheep of Little Bethel shrank closer together as the fire blazed yet more brilliantly. In its red light they beheld small black imps skipping excitedly back and forth, while the air was continually rent with shrieks, presumably of souls in anguish.

"I's done been sanctified, O good Lawd! don' yo' make no mistake 'bout dat. I's done got 'ligion in all de chu'ches in Poketown," said Sister Roxy Bristow in an agony of supplication.

"Baptis', Baptis' I wuh bawn, an' a Baptis' will I die," chanted Mary Jane Finney in quavering accents.

"Brothah Johnsing," whispered Sister Rebecca Brown, who had long cherished a secret admiration for that gentleman, "hide yo'se'f, Brothah Johnsing."

And Brother Johnson gladly availed himself of the proffered refuge behind her ample skirt; he had an uncomfortable feeling that his proper place was in the midst of the red fire, and the idea was unpleasant.

Gabriel was enjoying himself exceedingly. The feathers in his hair had dropped out one by one until only two remained; they, however, stood erect, one over each ear. In his hand he carried the pitchfork he had snatched from Isaiah Bristow that he might poke the fire. At last he mounted the fence, and standing on the top rail waved the fork about his head in the exuberance of his delight.

"Yondah's ole Satan hisse'f," moaned Aunt Martha Young miserably, "I knows him by he hawns."

"Lay low, Brothah Johnsing, lay low," counselled Sister Rebecca sotto voce, "don' git skeert."

"W-w-ho skeert? Me? I ain' skeert," returned Mr. Johnson with chattering teeth, drawing the folds of her skirt closer around his crouching figure.

"Brothah Wiggins," said Mary Jane Finney tearfully, "whut yo' got tuh say, Brothah Wiggins?"

But Brother Wiggins had nothing at all to say. He could only lift his other trembling hand upward. Aunt Martha and Aunt Janty did not imitate this motion; to do so they would have been obliged to relinquish the tails of his coat.

"Dey's a sannah 'mongst us," said Brother Hyatt suddenly, "an' Mistah Satan am on he trail."

"Lay low, Brothah Johnsing, lay low," whispered Sister Rebecca. And Brother Johnson laid very low.

"Brothah Johnsing am de out an' outes' sinnah in Poketown," said Sister Roxy Bristow suddenly.

"A-amen, dat's so!" agreed Mrs. Johnson fervently.

"Brothah Johnsing," said Mr. Hyatt solemnly, "yo's wanted; say yo' prayahs."

"Lay low, Brothah Johnsing," repeated Sister Rebecca, "lay mighty low!"

At this point Gabriel on the fence dropped his pitchfork into the graveyard and sprang after it. A general stampede ensued, and the congregation of Little Bethel seemed to scatter to the four winds of heaven. Gabriel, recognizing several familiar figures, gave a shrill whistle of warning, and the Indians dispersed swiftly and in consternation.

Aunt Janty Gibbs stumbled in her flight and fell headlong upon something warm and soft; she clasped convulsively to her bosom the tail of a black coat; while Aunt Martha Young, rushing blindly in another direction, clung desperately to its mate; the coat itself was nowhere to be seen.

Surprised at the silence which followed the thud of departing feet, Aunt Janty raised her head cautiously and looked about her. Mechanically she glanced at the soft substance upon which she lay; she looked long and earnestly.

"Nevah thunk I'd take meh patchwuck quilt tuh heav'n," she muttered, examining it carefully by the light of the moon. Something lay on the ground beside her and she touched it gingerly; it proved to be a tin horn, crushed flat from being stepped upon, and it looked strangely familiar.

"Jerooselum Jehosaphat!" exclaimed Aunt Janty as she removed a turkey-feather from its mouthpiece.

Aunt Janty sat motionless for some minutes, absorbed in thought; then she arose and folded her torn and muddy quilt across her arm, and gathering up her damaged horn and as many feathers as she could find started for home. On her way she encountered the brush-heap smouldering in its ashes; she stopped and looked scornfully at it.

"Mistah Clayton's ole bresh-pile," she muttered with a toss of her head.

As she passed the residence of Brother Wiggins the face of that gentleman appeared at an upper window.

"Aun' Janty," he said, "has yo' done 'scape f'om ole Satan? I done lock mehse'f up hyah jes' tuh pray fuh yo', Aun' Janty."

"Hyah am de tail o' yo' coat," replied the lady briefly as she hung it on the fence; "I ain' gwine tuh need hit no mo', nuh yo' prayahs nuthah."

"Ole Satan!" she said aloud as she walked on; "'peahs like *young Satan am mo' tuh de p'int.*"

Reaching her own house, she repaired to the cot occupied by her grandson. It was empty. She then re-covered her father, who complained irritably of the cold, and replaced the can of red paint on its shelf in the wash-shed; it had been overturned and its contents had deeply stained a pile of clothes waiting to be washed. Aunt Janty looked grimly at them; she then picked up the wreck of her turkey-tail fan and looked at it also.

Extinguishing the lamp, she opened the front door on a crack and sat down just behind it.

"Janty," called the old man querulously, "come tuh baid."

"I's gwine tuh wait fuh Gabriel," returned Aunt Janty grimly.



SPRING

CLARA ELIZABETH WARD

SHE rose a gala-dress to don,
And lay her shroud aside:
It crumbled into snow-drops on
The day she walked a bride.



THE PLAYER

BY WILLIAM LUCIUS GRAVES

YOUNG minstrel, from whose flying finger-tips
Sheer beauty drops with that fine, ancient ease
The gods gave any faun by Delian seas
Who set the syrinx to his fluting lips,
I, hearkening you, know how hid water drips
In cadence crystalline; I hear the bees
Amid the mellilot; winged harmonies
Blow to me whence the old sea heaves and dips.
Silence I keep, but in my heart there beats
A keen and flame-like joy that cannot fail,
But still must brighten down the lapsing years;
And with it ever heavenly sadness meets,
A poignance sweet that makes my cheek go pale—
So near to smiling lies the source of tears.

FATE'S JUGGLER

By Prince Vladimir Vaniatsky



WHEN a man has juggled with Fate more years than are agreeable to count, and has been to the four corners of the world and back again, even Paris is not attractive enough to hold him long.

In the years that have passed since the days of my childhood ended in a sudden moment, and the man emerged from the shattered wrecks of a boy's quaint fancies, I have been a Parisian and a wanderer. It is not often that the two terms are synonymous. Your good Parisian, although not a lover of his own fireside, is most certainly a lover of his boulevards, his St. Germain, his Bois, his Avenue des Acacias, his Armenonville. And if in summer your Parisian wanders to Dieppe, to Etretat, to Boulogne-sur-Mer, what are those festive places but summer suburbs of his beloved city?

Yet I, Pierre de Deux Ponts, am as familiar with the quaint byways of Tōkiō as I am with the Boulevard des Italiens, as at home in the Opera-House at Buenos Ayres as at the Grand Opera in Paris, and as welcome in the clubs of St. Petersburg as in my own clubs in the Vortex of the World.

If my preface is lengthy, it is because I would have you understand a little of the spirit which has led me hither and thither, without a thought except that my bed be clean, my food good, the Goddess of Chance not far from hand, and the women fair to the eye.

It was this spirit, which our hereditary enemies, the Germans, have so aptly termed the wanderlust, that led me to the City of Mexico. There was no other attraction. Paris is always the same, and even with a horse of my own entered for the Grand Prix, I determined to pack my luggage and go forth on one of those wanderings which might lead me to the end of the earth, and whose length might cover almost any period of time.

When I reached the City of Mexico I felt as though I had reached the long-sought Fountain of Youth. I was happy—need I remark that it is a chronic condition with Pierre de Deux Ponts? My health was better than it had been for some time; a considerable sum of money lay untouched at my banker's.

My first impression of the City of Mexico was a wash of muddy grays and browns, blotched here and there with colorings of dull pink and yellow, and with the verdant green of a tropical vegetation above

everything. There was the air of a well-executed water-color about the city. When my carriage had finally ambled easily to my hotel, and I had eaten a dinner of more than ordinarily good preparation, considered the distance of Mexico from Paris, I bethought myself of some means of diversion. In my portmanteau there was a long list of names and addresses, compiled from the many calling cards collected in my pursuit of happiness. It is extraordinary how many people one may meet and forget. Yet I do not forget. I am methodical—the name, address, circumstances of meeting, and a brief personal description of everyone I meet is entered in a ledger carefully kept by my valet. Because a man lives ten thousand miles from your home is no proof that at some future time your wanderings may not lead you to that spot. So I glanced over the list of Mexicans which I had kept. The name of Señor Don Manuel Menocal y Labastida recalled very pleasant memories of some weeks in Monaco, and, later, of many delightful meetings in Paris. My memoranda recalled to my mind the fact that Señor Menocal was wealthy, clever, and a devotee of the Goddess of Chance. What more was needed?

At the hotel office I ordered a carriage and started forth to the house of Don Manuel. We at last came to it, a most forbidding place from the outside—Don Manuel later told me that it had once been a convent. Don Manuel met me at the door with a gracious hospitality, recalling himself our acquaintanceship of three years past. He showered welcomes upon me, and then drew me into his library.

"A word, Don Pedro," he said.

"As you will, Don Manuel."

"You remember Donna Dolores?"

"Can Don Manuel forget the evening at Armenonville?"

"Ah, no! But, Don Pedro, Donna Dolores——"

"I understand," I answered. "Have no fear."

Then we went forward into the drawing-room, and I met Donna Maria de las Mercedes Menocal de Canseco, her three daughters, and her maiden sister. Need I say that I did not blame Don Manuel for the little affair of Donna Dolores. Donna Maria was old and her figure was far from graceful.

My call was brief, as the first call of courtesy should always be. Then I took my carriage and drove as far as the Calle de San Francisco. It was still early in the evening, and, dismissing my carriage, I started on foot to walk the mile or so which separated me from my hotel. The street was animated; the shops, still open, quite brilliant and interesting for a city which is deemed as provincial as is the City of Mexico. My way led me past a stationer's. As I stopped to gaze upon the elaborate window display my eye fell upon a large number of playing-cards, of the finest French quality, shown in a corner of the window, and marked at a price much lower than they would command in Paris. The

incident piqued my curiosity, and I strolled in, purchased some stationery, some odd trifles, and a package of the playing-cards. At the door a shy Mexican boy, with luminous eyes, begged me, in the name of God, to let him carry my packages. So on we went, up the Calle de San Francisco.

When I had reached my room I turned on the lights, broke the seal of the case which held the cards, and looked at them carefully through a magnifying glass. My suspicions were not unfounded. The cards were marked, marked only with the faintest indentations of some sharp instrument, but so that a carefully trained and sensitive finger could easily distinguish the marks which were apparent to the eye only upon investigation.

I chuckled to myself. I had by chance, that same chance which attends my footsteps on every hand, run across an ingenious scheme. The details were simple. Someone in Paris had purchased a large supply of the finest quality cards obtainable. Each package had been opened and the cards marked. Then, the packages resealed, they were sent to some small exporting agent to be shipped to the City of Mexico for sale, and the price was fixed very low. When the cards had reached Mexico they had been placed on sale at this low price, and by means of their excellence and the figure at which they sold soon permeated into all the clubs and private houses of the city. When the details had become plain to me I ran through my mind the names of all the men of the shady world of Paris, vainly trying to recall some person who was capable of such a brilliant, though dishonorable, coup. I could place no one who was not otherwise engaged. Yet I did forget little Canrobert, known to the agents de ville as "*Le Crevette*," or "*The Shrimp*." That mistake was a natural one, for the world of Paris imagined little Canrobert safe in French Guiana, that place which Lamartine so wittily described as the Dry Guillotine.

In the days which rapidly followed one another my social position at the City of Mexico was firmly established. Backed by influential friends, I was proposed for membership in several of the various clubs and was duly admitted to membership. One in particular was destined to play an important rôle in this incident. Perhaps, for the sake of those who were concerned, I had best refer to the club as the Conquistador, a name which will serve all purposes.

Meanwhile I had carefully destroyed the marked cards which I had purchased. They would be unfortunate evidence to find in a man's room. Nevertheless, I kept my eyes open for the man whose mind had evolved the plan of sending them there. It was not until some little time later that I had the slightest inkling as to his identity, although I had seen cards similar to those I had purchased in use at the clubs and in private houses. Yet at no place did I see signs which would

enable me to settle upon the vaurien who was profiting by his dishonorable method. For, be it known, I hold in contempt a man who wins money by cards in any but an honorable fashion.

On a Sunday afternoon Don Manuel, Don Carlos de Garmendia, Don Jose de Bruzares, and I were driving in the Paseo de la Reforma, when an approaching equipage caught the eye of Don Jose.

"Here comes Señor de Thou," he cried. Then, turning to me, he inquired if I was acquainted with Señor Don Anatole de Thou, of Paris. I replied that I was not. Don Carlos raised his eyebrows as though to question.

"Don Anatole was most excellently introduced. Among his letters was one from the Countess de Sermet."

"Ah!" I cried, for I knew then that I had at last met the man who was profiting by the marked cards. And I knew also that it was not his brain that had originated the scheme, but that of the undoubtedly clever *Françoise de Sermet*.

As M. de Thou wheeled by in an English dogcart, with red wheels, he gave an elaborate flourish with his whip. I looked at him keenly, but failed to recognize him.

"What wonderful luck Don Anatole has with cards," Don Carlos remarked. "I lost eight thousand dollars to him one night at the Conquistador."

"Indeed," I answered. "Then the play runs high at the Conquistador."

"By no means as high as in Paris, Don Pedro," answered Don Manuel, "but it is not a game for babies."

"How long has M. de Thou been here?" I asked casually.

"Almost a year," Don Manuel replied. "He is, like yourself, a member of the Conquistador, and is very popular."

Come, come, said I to myself, who is this M. de Thou? Why has he risked so dangerous a game over such a space of time? Does he not know that he stands on the brink of a volcano? His life would not be worth much if these Mexican grandees were to discover the means by which he has had such wonderful luck at cards.

I determined that M. de Thou and I should meet at a quiet hand of cards in the card-room of the Conquistador. Then I would be sure that he was the one who knew the secret of the marked cards.

It was a week later when I chanced in the reading-room of the Conquistador with Don Manuel. Don Carlos de Garmendia, to whom I had taken quite a strong liking, stood chatting with M. de Thou in a window. We met and drifted into an amiable conversation.

"Don Carlos tells me that you know the Countess de Sermet," said M. de Thou.

"I have had that pleasure," I remarked. Upon the minute I de-

cided that what I was to do must be done before de Thou had time to communicate with the Countess. I also gauged that he would not take the risk of a cable, even with a cipher code.

"Let us have a game of Don Pedro," said Don Carlos, mentioning a game much in favor in Mexico.

"As it is named like myself, I would be pleased to play," I answered, and the four of us adjourned to the near-by room where green baize tables were comfortably arranged.

We cut for deals, and it so fell that M. de Thou was the first dealer. While I carelessly glanced out of a window at a crowd of peons returning from mass in honor of some one of the innumerable saints whose name-days are honored in Mexico, I watched M. de Thou's fingers as he dealt. Each card was held carefully, though only for a second, before it passed out of his hand. A long, delicate forefinger touched at the corner as each card passed.

"Good!" said I to myself. I had M. de Thou spotted. The next thought was to discover whether or not he had a confederate. So, in turn, I watched each of the Mexicans as they dealt. Both Don Manuel and Don Carlos threw the cards on the table rapidly and carelessly. They, at least, were unacquainted with the markings of the cards.

When I dealt I took pains to remember only the hand that I had dealt M. de Thou. That I knew as well as I did my own. The play was not high, but I determined that I should win from Don Anatole, as the Mexicans affectionately called him. It would have been easy for me to have done so, but in an instant a quick light in Don Anatole's eyes caused me to skilfully lose the hand. The suspicion lulled, I played an easy game, losing more often than I won. As I had plenty of money, M. de Thou congratulated himself that he had found another victim, and began to show me much consideration. But I had different plans, and never had occasion to play when M. de Thou had a hand in the game.

Don Carlos was a charming young man, of good carriage and address, and with that indefinable charm of manner which could not help but warm one towards him. He was a man of moderate wealth, owning a silver mine and a rubber plantation in one of the provinces. A bachelor, with no family dependent upon him, he was able to spend his comfortable income as it pleased him. He had travelled, could talk to me in excellent French, and was, in general, a good companion.

That night I was due at a small dance at which Don Manuel was the host. Don Carlos was, of course, one of the guests, and it was with much pleasure that I watched him as he waltzed with Donna Elena, the second and most beautiful of Don Manuel's daughters. Donna Elena was a beauty of the true Andalusian type, with great eyes which held the promise of a world of love. Her skin, rich-tinted olive, was

flushed with the most bewitching touch of warm red blood beneath its surface. Her lips were as scarlet as a passion-flower. Donna Elena was clad in blue, with a wreath of the beautiful blue myosotis flowers bound in her hair and on her corsage.

As I stood watching the dancing Don Manuel stepped up to me.

"Donna Elena is a most beautiful dancer," I said, "and I am glad that she has promised me two dances this evening. But watch Don Carlos. He too is graceful, and so lithe and supple." I looked keenly at Don Manuel as I spoke. I saw the quick wish spring to his eyes, and, although an old bachelor and childless, I could read his feelings.

"He is a man one would be proud to have in his family," I said.

"It is so, Don Pedro," Don Manuel answered, "but things are no longer as they were when I was young. The young people of to-day in Mexico do much of the choosing for themselves." But Don Manuel did not seem worried, nor need he, for the light that sprang from Donna Elena's eyes to Don Carlos and back again told but the one story.

I have ever been for favoring the little God of Love. When I took Donna Elena out on the floor for our first dance I spoke of my great liking for Don Carlos. Donna Elena flushed, and her eyes turned from mine and went across the room looking for him.

"He is a prince," she whispered. "You understand?"

"I understand," I answered her. The confidence which she gave to me so freely and with such a curious commingling of shyness and awakened passion warmed my heart towards her. A child in years, but with the great joy of life fresh and unspotted in her heart. Who would not envy her, who would not envy the man who had evoked it? A lonely, bitter thought crept through my brain and a pain came to my heart. Why had I grown old and let the greatest gift of life go by? Bah, pathos in *Pierre de Deux Ponts*, sentiment in a hardened old rascal. How Paris would laugh to hear me speak so!

Even as I was dancing with Donna Elena I saw Don Carlos leave the room with Don Manuel. The two men linked arms and went swiftly out, as though a hidden joy was beneath their light footsteps.

"Don Carlos has the next dance," said Donna Elena, "and he has gone off with father. Let us dance it together." So when the strains of the music commenced again Donna Elena and I came in from the patio. Don Carlos and Don Manuel were still absent.

The night was late when the dance ended, and Donna Maria beamed complacently over the supper on which she had spent much thought. At its close Don Manuel rose in his seat.

"I am so happy, my friends," he said, and could say no more, though his outstretched hands were held towards Donna Elena and Don Carlos, who sat side by side. The table broke into a hum of applause and congratulations. The waiters hurried around, filling glasses for the toast

which was to be drunk to the newly betrothed. Don Pablo, uncle of Don Carlos, gave the toast, short and pithy, and we all drank happiness to the young couple.

A week had passed when I turned into the Conquistador on my way home from a reception given by the Spanish Minister. I noticed there was a hum of excitement among the members of the club, who were gathered in little knots and talking eagerly. I lounged into the reading-room. A late *Figaro* and *Galignani's* had been placed on the files and I interested myself in them. It was not until I picked up the *Petit Journal* that I was at last fully aroused. There, in an item well-displayed, was a short, brief account of the escape of the convict, Canrobert, better known to the gardiens de la paix as "Le Crevette," from French Guiana. It told how he had effected a flight thought to be impossible some months before. The affair had been kept quiet until the detectives, weary of their fruitless search, made the news public, in the hope that some aid might come through the publication.

Canrobert! I had heard of him, but I had never seen him. He was, so I had been informed, a shrewd youngster, but a vile one. I tried to recall the descriptions which I had known; it was all in vain. Not a distinguishing feature recurred to my mind.

I rose from my chair and went into the gaming-room. No one was playing at the tables, although in a corner M. de Thou stood laughing excitedly with a dissolute young Spaniard, resident in Mexico, and a group of callow youths who thought it the fashion to be seen in the company of such a lucky player as M. de Thou.

"What is the news, Don Jose?" I asked Senor Don Jose de Bruzares.

"The devil and all his angels," Don Jose responded, with a vicious look across the room at M. de Thou.

"I do not understand," I remarked.

"Well, then, if you have not heard it, Don Carlos has been ruined. He has ruined himself at cards with Señor de Thou." He had dropped the affectionate "Don Anatole" with which he usually referred to the Frenchman. And I noticed a covert sneer which seemed to include me as well as de Thou.

"Don Jose," I cried, looking him straight in the eye, "exactly how much has Don Carlos lost to de Thou?"

"Nearly five hundred thousand dollars, Mexican."

"A minute in private, Don Jose," I demanded. Unwillingly he passed with me into the reading-room. "Have you any suspicions?" I asked.

"Madre de Dios, yes, but what good will they do?"

"A great deal," I responded. "Will you stand behind me? Do not question anything I may do, but stand behind my chair when I sit

down to play cards. Get some warm friend to stand behind de Thou, and gather quite a crowd around to watch the play."

"Do you mean to play with him?" he asked.

"No less," I replied, and we went again to the card-room.

"What devilish good luck you have, de Thou," I called to him.

"It is passable," he answered, although I could see the glint of triumph in his eyes.

"Will you try a hand with me?" I asked.

"Not unless you play for large stakes," he answered, "a trait which I have not noticed."

"I will play you for the amount you have won from Don Carlos in one hand of cards alone," I responded. "Is the amount too small?"

De Thou wavered. It was an awful risk, but after his taunt about the small stakes he could not well refuse.

"I do not wish to cast discredit upon your financial condition, Count de Deux Ponts," he said slowly, weighing each word, "but can you cover such a sum? Remember that it is almost exactly a million francs."

I laughed.

"There is a bank across the street, M. de Thou," I said, "which has on deposit my letters of credit, issued by the banking house of Rothschild. Will you cross with me and ascertain my credit?"

"It is unnecessary for him to do so," cried Don Manuel, who had just entered the room. "If the Count will play with Señor de Thou, I will guarantee the payment."

We were seated.

"We will cut for deals," I announced, and the deal fell to me. As I passed out the cards I knew the hand that de Thou held. We played *ecarté*. Slowly, cautiously, he laid down his first card. I took it. I advanced a card which I knew he could not take. Card by card we fought the hand out, until at its end de Thou sat staring at me sullenly across the table. He had lost!

Even as he did so a club attendant pushed his way through the crowd bearing a cablegram in his hand. It was addressed to Señor Don Anatole de Thou. He tore it open. He sneered plainly.

"Gentlemen," he cried, "I have the honor to state that the Count Pierre de Deux Ponts is a card sharp. Here is a cablegram from the Comtesse de Sermet."

"The men stirred uneasily, but I felt Don Manuel and Don Jose lay their hands upon my shoulder with a warm, friendly touch. The scene was dramatic. Not a word was spoken. Then I turned to look at the man who stood behind me. Not a face but which gave me back a friendly glance.

"Very good, Le Crevette," I cried, "very good!" Then I turned

again. "Gentlemen, the man who calls himself de Thou is Canrobert, known in Paris as "The Shrimp." He escaped from the French penal colony at Guiana about a year ago." Then suddenly the mist cleared from my brain, and I remembered what I had been so long trying to recall. "On his arm is the brand of the Bagne at Brest—the left arm!"

De Thou turned and broke through the room with an incredible dexterity and swiftness. But, even as he turned, Don Manuel, with a wonderful skill for an old man, thrust his foot forward and tripped Canrobert in his flight.

"Don Carlos is not ruined," I said, "for the money was won from him by marked cards." Then I told them the story of how I discovered the marked cards and had waited to expose the trick that Canrobert had played.

Don Carlos and Donna Elena have called their boy Pierre, so that a lonely old bachelor has a godson, though no child of his own.

THE QUAIN'T OLD VILLAGE OF MONTEREY

BY WILLIAM H. FROST

DON'T you remember the Coast-Line Trip
From Santa Paula to San José?
And don't you remember the stop we made
At the quaint old village of Monterey?

How the villagers smiled as we strolled along,—
Noddingly smiled in their languid way,—
Ah! the joy in our hearts was hard to hide
In the quaint old village of Monterey.

Was hard to hide; but we didn't care,
What suited them best they could do or say,
For our ears were deaf, and our eyes were blind,
In the quaint old village of Monterey.

Fain would I return, for one brief hour,
To the wooded hills and the wine-dark Bay,
And the blissful haze that your presence lent
To the quaint old village of Monterey.

A CONFEDERATE OF CHAPERONES

By *Alma Martin Estabrook*

Author of "My Cousin Patricia"



IT was, the doctor said, to be a break-down or a vacation; Taunton had overworked. Taunton denied it; scoffed at the prescription; went away and threshed out six nights more, the victim of a savage insomnia, and on the seventh took the train for Buena Vista, a quiet place up in the hills. He registered at a sleepy little inn that was scarcely more than an ambitious boarding-house, and for a week he ate, and grumbled, and slept.

At the end of that time he became conscious of his interest in the girl at a table opposite, and realized that it had stirred within him at the first sight he had of her. She was not a particularly pretty girl,—Alexia, his fiancée, was a model few women measured up to,—but her cold little face could light with a startling vividness, and beneath her serious eyes there sometimes smiled a constantly repressed but humor-loving mouth. Her utter lack of interest in her surroundings, and her refusal to be aroused to them by the ceaseless efforts of the two stately chaperones who constantly attended her, interested and puzzled him.

He was still turning it over in his mind when the explanation suddenly came from an entirely unexpected source.

"I have a confession to make to you, Mr. Taunton," Mrs. Claymoore said to him one evening on an upper balcony.

Mrs. Claymoore was the younger of the chaperones, and the one who took the initiatives. She was a woman who went plump at all her points, as Taunton had discovered.

"A confession is usually a pleasant thing to listen to," he smiled.

"But not always to make. However, I don't mind this one. Necessity is responsible for it. I have been ferreting, Mr. Taunton."

He nodded. "Not an altogether uninteresting business."

"I found it interesting and most satisfactory. I wanted to learn if you were all you seemed."

"I!" Taunton could not help staring a little.

Mrs. Claymoore nodded briskly.

"I needed your help in a very delicate matter, but first I must know

more about you; one doesn't trust to impressions when one has passed fifty."

"And you learned——"

"A number of pleasant things, among them that you are betrothed to a charming girl, to whom you are devoted, that you are a Taunton of the old Virginia family, and that you are secretary to my cousin, Henry Wheeler."

"Is it possible! Mr. Wheeler's cousin may ask anything of me that she wishes," he cried heartily.

"I thought you might say that," she smiled. And sitting down she indicated that he was to attend closely to what she was about to say.

"You have seen, of course, that my niece is a very unhappy young person, Mr. Taunton," she began. "She is grieving over what she believes to be an irreparable loss,—ideals and a man,—although, frankly, I'm convinced that the man doesn't enter in largely except as he represented the ideals. But she has been brought up on ideals. She is a motherless little thing, and ideals were her inheritance. Poor child! And now she finds herself bereft. Of course, she will get over it, but I begrudge for her the youth she is wasting. And it is waste—mere wanton waste. She wove a wreath of ideals and put it on an idol that was clay to the chin; the first barb of temptation shattered it. She ought to be thankful it came when it did. So many women are forced to spend their lives patching up worthless idols and keeping fresh their shrines. And it's a heart-breaking business, Heaven knows."

"But if she loved him," he protested.

"She didn't. She only loved what she made him stand for."

"Isn't it the same thing?"

"Certainly not! It's as if one should mourn for an effigy."

She looked off for a moment towards the hills. He thought she was thinking less of the girl, perhaps, than of the stuffed images in her own life. When she turned to him it was with her brisk, frank air.

"Anne Dunbar, her maternal aunt, and I have been perfect failures, as you have also seen, at rousing her. She needs youth. We were in despair, when you came, and we saw in you the possible solution of our difficulties. But had you not shown so friendly a spirit we should not have dared ask you to help us. During the rest of your stay will you not try to awaken in her the interest in those things in which all young, healthy, and normal-minded people are interested? Dance with her; golf with her; drive with her. She likes you. She won't refuse all your invitations. Some of them will appeal to her. And if you succeed, even in a measure, Anne Dunbar and I will bless you forever."

"Frankly," said he, remembering the melancholy and indifferent eyes of the girl, "it doesn't look promising, but assuredly I will do all I can."

Mrs. Claymoore rose and held out her hand.

"I'll trust you," she said heartily. "And you simply can't know what it will mean to us."

II.

THE next morning he saw the girl go into the bridge and promptly followed her. The bridge is an important part of Buena Vista. It is as long as the street itself, and has packed into it, snugly and heterogeneously, shops from every country in the world. The girl was holding off a grinning pagan deity at arm's length when he descended upon her, her head tilted in inspection, her eyes narrow.

"So glad to find you here," he cried, coming up to her; "I regard you as my salvation."

"You distinguish me; the experience is unique, I assure you."

"I shouldn't have said so."

She nodded, smiling a little coldly. "It's quite true. But what is it I am to save you from?"

"The pitfalls of my own decidedly questionable taste as to women's furbelows. The chap from Naples, in the booth down there, has some brooches, goddess heads, carved from the lava of Vesuvius, and I've been wavering for days between two of them. I want one for my mother. Would you mind coming to look at them?"

"I'll come gladly. Perhaps I may be able to spare her some of the things I have had to suffer at the hands of my own well-meaning male relatives."

"Thanks, awfully. Are you ready to leave the pagan?"

"I can come back to him—it's what one usually does to one's idols, isn't it?" and there was a queer little half droop, half sneer, at the corners of her pretty, sensitive mouth.

"I can't say, I'm sure," he declared cheerfully; "I'm not an idolator, you know."

"That's odd; most men are."

"Oh, I like a lot of things and people, if that's what you mean, but I don't put them in niches and bow down to them."

"But you put the girl you love there, don't you? Aunt Marna told me about her, you know."

"No, I don't. She wouldn't have it if I wanted to. She's not that sort."

"But all men worship love itself, although, to be sure, they only do it fitfully."

"That's not a pretty sentiment," he objected lightly; "it reflects on constancy, doesn't it?"

"It isn't sentiment; it's truth," she answered gravely.

"But there's a lot of constancy in the world," he urged, as they walked together through the narrow aisle between the booths.

"Is there?" she asked, and the change in her face and the quickness with which it had chilled struck him forcibly; "I hadn't discovered it."

Taunton stopped to exchange a coin for a bunch of water-lilies with a little girl who had so waxen a face that she looked like the lilies she was selling. When he caught up with Miss Neill he held the flowers out to her.

"I can't refuse that child back there," he laughed, "and I can't go about carrying lilies. Won't you help me in my need by taking them?"

"Thank you," she said, "they are beautiful." And she pushed the stems through her belt.

"About—constancy, you know," he began, speaking lightly; "isn't it a sort of a case of—say chilblains, with you? You know how it is with the man who has 'em, he imagines the world is tottering to its end because of them. It's the same way with anything else we may happen to have, scepticism, asthma, inconstancy; we are always looking about for it, and, naturally, the thing we look most assiduously for is the thing we find. I'll venture to say that old fellow over there with the palsy would tell you half the people in the world had the palsy. It's all he sees in his paper or hears of from his neighbors. Isn't that so?"

She turned on him with kindling eyes.

"You've been talking to Aunt Marna," she accused.

"It's a privilege I cultivate," he admitted.

"But she hasn't—she wouldn't dare—has she?"

"Let the brooches go, please, and come home by the trail, won't you?"

"Yes, I will. You must explain to me."

She marched ahead. The sun flecked her squared shoulders, and touched the nape of her neck where the hair grew up so prettily.

"Is it so hard for you to understand that I have only put together my own natural deductions as to your manner and your words?" he asked when they walked through the sumach together.

"Am I, then, so hopelessly transparent?"

"I only make out that life has disappointed you, and that you are, perhaps, a little bitter," he said gently.

"One doesn't elect to become bitter," she flashed, more in simple defence than as a plea.

"No, I know that. It's a nasty bog to get caught in—that of despond. I've stumbled into it myself."

"You!" she cried, veering quickly from herself; "one wouldn't have imagined it!"

"That's because I wasn't long in pulling out," he laughed.

"It's not always easy pulling out."

"That it isn't. I found that out. Some people need a friendly rope thrown them, you know."

She nodded; then of a sudden she turned upon him with a smile that half startled him.

"You may as well confess it," she said.

"What?" said he, really puzzled.

"That it's what you are doing now—throwing me a rope."

The smile and the life back of the coldness of her eyes encouraged him.

"Well," he said, still lightly, "and if I am, will you catch it?"

"It's certainly very nice of you to go to the trouble for a stranger," she mused, "and I suppose I ought to be gracious enough to—to try to catch it if you fling it. But—but frankly——"

"Yes?" said Taunton encouragingly.

"If it were not for being impolite——"

"I know you won't be that!"

"I suppose I shouldn't want to be. And I'm not altogether without gratitude."

"Chuck it," said he.

She laughed. It was the first time he had heard her, and he wondered she was not always at it, it was such a fascinating sound.

"The rope?" she asked.

"The gratitude."

She suddenly held out her hand to him, and her face was serious.

"You mustn't ask me to do that, because I couldn't. And if—if I don't get out you must not think yourself to blame in any way, nor that—that I haven't really tried."

Then she stopped to straighten a bent branch of delicate green ash that a passing burro had swept aside, and when she came on they talked about the early morning expedition to a distant show-point which Mrs. Claymoore had planned for the following day.

III.

"TELL me about your Alexia," she said to him one day.

"It's always hard to describe a woman."

"I know, and some women refuse to go into words, they are so full of changes, so evanescent, so——"

"Not Alexia. She is always the same. The only change I ever knew her to make was from pinafores to trains, and she did that so gradually you never noticed it till it was accomplished."

She smoothed an oak-leaf over her finger and looked at him furtively.

"How long has she existed for you?" she asked.

"Always. Does that seem odd to you?"

"A little, and very romantic."

"I never thought of the romance of it. But it was a natural arrangement."

"Prearranged?"

He nodded. "Two doting fathers, you know. They decreed it as soon as they found the baby was a girl."

She laughed. "And were you informed at once?"

"Soon after—I was still in knickers."

"I wonder what you did."

"Did? I howled long and dismally. I wanted no more encumbrances. I had already two sisters."

"But you gave up howling over it long ago, no doubt," she observed with a smile.

He stretched himself on the grass with a lazy little sigh of content.

"Alexia has always been a very reasonable, comfortable sort of a person," he said.

Her white knuckle burst through the leaf smoothed tightly over it. She caught up a broken branch and began to strip it slowly, letting the leaves fall in her lap.

"It robs me of a theory—you're getting on so happily together; I've always thought that Fate resented having such matters taken out of her hands, and that she showed her resentment in a lot of uncomfortable ways. But now you've shown me what a worthless thing it is, I'll throw it out of my mental cupboard, along with a lot of other rubbish that I find has accumulated there. An annual overhauling is a positive necessity, isn't it? Now do show me her picture—Alexia's. I'm sure you must have one, and I do want to see her."

"This is she," he said, tossing her a small picture and watching her as she bent over it.

"How exquisite! No wonder you love her!" she cried.

Taunton looked up at a long-bodied bird that flew out from the rocks high above and, circling, swept off into space.

The girl bent over the pictured features. "I wish you would tell me more of her. This is the outer woman, but I don't know the inner."

"She's just as she looks," he said smilingly.

"But somebody says that a woman is a carafe, and that it's what is within which sparkles truly, not the beautifully cut and polished outside."

"I believe you're right," he reflected.

"Oh, I didn't say it. I only believe it."

"So do I."

"There is no doubt that the beautiful receptacle is a great deal."

"Even if the wine in it is sometimes flat, eh?"

"When it is flat the bottle gets an extra polish, have you noticed?"

They laughed together. The bird came back and swept again into the shelter of the rocks. A bumble-bee, big and black and yellow, buzzed noisily about the pink flower-laden brim of the girl's hat, and bumped his round body against the waxen foliage. She clasped her hands around her knees and looked at Taunton as he lay watching her, and life was in her eyes, and color in her cheeks. She held her breath for a moment till the bee had discovered the sham of her roses and flown angrily away, then she drew a deep breath of contentment and pleasure.

"I'm really very much obliged to you, you know," she said.

"I can't think what for."

"Can't you. It's odd you should forget what you've done for me. I never shall. For throwing me the rope, of course. You were so patient with me. I wasn't very gracious about taking hold of it, I'm afraid. I wonder why you didn't go away and leave me in 'the bog.'"

"There were several reasons," he said.

"Reasons always interest me," she suggested, when he stopped.

"These wouldn't—they were dull enough."

"I suppose," she mused, "it was really because there was too much of the good Samaritan in you to let you pass me by."

"I suppose so," said he, shading his eyes with his arm and staring up at the sky.

"It's a pleasanter sensation to feel the solid terra-firma of normal, cheerful thinking under your feet than the quicksands of melancholia. And I owe it all to you. Some time I hope I shall find a way of paying part of my debt."

She stood up and smoothed her crinkled dimity ruffles.

"I'm going down to buy drawn-work of a deserving and stranded Mexican widow who holds a sale to-day in the Southern parlors."

"But you're not going now! Just when we're so comfortable!" he protested.

"We are always more or less comfortable, aren't we?" she laughed.

Taunton sighed into the hat tilted over his eyes.

"Besides, I promised the aunts not to keep them waiting."

"Then I'll come along."

"Oh, no; I couldn't let you."

"Why not?"

"Men don't go. You would be the only one there."

"All the better."

"They would say——"

"What? What would they say?"

"Probably that we were engaged and were buying our table finery. People are so foolish about such things, you know."

"Well, I shouldn't mind. Should you?"

"Certainly I should mind. There's Alexia; had you forgotten her?"

"I'm afraid I had," he admitted ruefully.

She lifted her parasol.

"I leave you to your meditations. No doubt you hate them. Men generally do. But they're often salutary, and I hope yours will do you a lot of good."

"You are sure you won't let me come along?"

"Perfectly sure. Remember Alexia!"

"Rubbish! You don't want me!"

"Your reputation as a devoted fiancé would be in tatters if I didn't look out for it. You take no thought of it whatever," she said reproachfully.

"Will you come back when it's over? There'll be an hour or more before dinner."

"You can be very absurd," she declared witheringly.

But when she had gone to the turn in the trail she lifted her parasol and under its laces waved him a gay little farewell. Then she disappeared, and it was several minutes before he saw her, like a pink, wind-blown flower, drifting slowly across the cañon below.

IV.

MRS. CLAYMOORE stood, a gray, straight figure, against the granite side of the mountain, looking through her field-glasses at the trail and the man who rode slowly up it, his horse picking his own deliberate way. Having made out the silent and preoccupied figure, she climbed to a boulder, and taking off her veil waved it briskly and patiently until she finally succeeded in attracting his attention, whereupon she climbed down again, and busied herself with a hammer and a chisel until he came up to her.

"Trilobites?" asked Taunton as he swung out of the saddle.

She nodded, smiling.

"But I didn't call you up here to talk about them," she said.

"I'm glad to be called on any account."

"I have wanted for a week to talk with you," she said.

"Then, dear Mrs. Claymoore, why didn't you say so?"

"I was afraid she might guess at our complicity, and things have gone too beautifully to spoil them now."

She dropped the hammer and the chisel into a cavernous bag at

her side, wiped her hands on a large handkerchief, and sat down on a ledge near Taunton.

"Well," said she, "it is accomplished."

He did not immediately reply.

"Anne Dunbar tells me she tried to thank you last night for what you have done, and that she failed utterly. She hasn't learned yet not to try to put her gratitude and her sympathy into words, and she goes about constantly busy with her useless endeavor. It's very silly of her at her age, isn't it? I wrote Henry about what you've done for us, and he wants me to tell you that his gratitude is as deep as ours,—he is tremendously fond of Kittye,—and that his private car is to be at your disposal whenever you are ready to use it for your bridal trip."

"Oh, really, Mrs. Claymoore——"

"Please don't spoil our pleasure by declining. I haven't any cars to offer you, but I wish you'd say you would take your wife down to my place in the country if you are married in the fall; the servants will be there to look after you, and it's ideally beautiful then. But you haven't told me when the marriage is to take place?"

"Alexia has decided on September."

"A charming month. Do tell me I may have the house made ready for you for a few weeks of the honeymoon."

"We have not decided on any of the details."

"She has, you may depend upon it. Women always do, you know. They have all that planned long before you men get round to it. But tell her about the house. And thank you more than I can ever tell you for what you've done for Kittye. You simply don't know what it means to Anne Dunbar and me."

She held out her hand, and Taunton took it mechanically.

"If you are going on up the mountain," she said, "I wish you'd tell Kittye that I've gone down. She wanted me to wait for her, and said she would lead her horse and walk with me, but I think a nap before luncheon would do me good, and I'm going down to take it."

She stooped and gathered up a cloth that had fallen out of her work-bag, dusted her sensible shoes with it, stuck it securely and tidily into a crevice of the rock, settled her bonnet, and, taking up her staff, departed with a smile.

Taunton went on up the mountain.

"Ah, you!" cried the girl, turning in the saddle. "Aunt Marna must have told you I was here."

"Blessed Aunt Marna!"

"Is she still hunting trilobites?"

"Not now. She wanted me to tell you she had gone down."

"Given a hammer and the prospect of trilobites, she wants nothing more," she laughed.

"Nothing," said he, "except your happiness."

"I am astonishingly happy. I was thinking of it awhile ago, before you came up. It's such a mistake to build our hope of tottery toy blocks, isn't it, that fall into ruins if you touch them? Yet that is just what I did, and I was wailing among them when you came and showed me the folly of it." She smiled at him a little mistily.

His answering smile was strange.

"I'm glad you are happy," he said, "although I haven't had much to do with it."

"Much?" she cried; "you've had everything—everything!"

"You'll be just as happy to-morrow as you are to-day."

"I hope so. Why not? Why shouldn't I be?"

"Why not? indeed," he said a little sharply; "you were meant for happiness."

"Is anything going to happen to-morrow to make me unhappy?" she asked.

"No. I was an idiot to suggest it—I'm going away to-morrow, is all."

"Has something happened—something to make it necessary?"

"Yes," said he.

"I hope it isn't anything serious," she said.

"It is very serious indeed."

"Oh, is Alexia ill?"

"No."

"Your mother?"

"She is very well. It is nothing to do with her."

She hesitated a moment before she said:

"Couldn't Cousin Henry help you if it's a matter of business? We are not ready to give you up just yet."

"Mr. Wheeler could not help me," he said, smiling oddly. "Bring your horse back from the edge; you are too near it."

"I'm so sorry for your going," she said, not paying any attention to the admonition. "You have done so much for our pleasure we shall miss you. But I'm sorrier, of course, for you, that you are troubled. And I want to help you, but I suppose I can't. Can I?"

"No, you can't help me," he said.

"There is nothing I so earnestly wish."

"That's good of you, and I'm obliged. But don't bother about me. I brought it on myself."

"By coming here?"

"Yes."

"Should you have stayed on at home?"

"Yes, undoubtedly."

"But the doctor prescribed it!"

"Doctors don't always know what they are prescribing."

"It isn't that—that you're ill—worse?"

"I'm perfectly well—perfectly. Don't worry, please. I don't deserve it."

"But I don't understand," she said, in her low, puzzled voice.

"No, thank Heaven, you don't!"

There was, at the moment, a movement in the undergrowth, a sharp cracking of branches, a tumbling and yelping and scurrying, and a hare, harassed by a half-dozen dogs, darted into the open beneath the feet of the startled horses. Taunton's mount reared and plunged backward, but the pony the girl rode sprang forward, and in the bound was half over the edge of the rock, his feet loosening stones and earth and sending them rolling into the cañon below.

"Jump!" Taunton cried to her.

The next instant he was off his horse and hurrying her back from the ledge. The released horse dashed past them, and they heard his feet grinding on the downward trail. The dogs tumbled over one another and plunged on through the scrub-oak. The mountain-bred pony cautiously regained his footing, and with a snort of terror at the danger escaped ran down the mountain.

The girl leaned against him, clung to him, trembling. His arms held her, soothed her, and when she would have drawn away, crushed her to him. She lifted her face and saw the shadow of fright and the love in his. A breath of terror escaped her.

"You understand now, don't you?" he said.

For a moment she rested against him.

"We must—must forget," she said sternly, hushing the sob in her throat; and she went on before him down the trail.

Farther down, near the village, they met Mrs. Claymoore. She was flushed, and troubled, and very much excited. And, as usual, she went for the thing which in her opinion had to be done. The branches had swept her bonnet awry; the bag with the trilobites sagged at her side; her glasses were dusty, but the eyes back of them were as keen as ever. They read the faces before her and reached a hasty conclusion.

"You have found out!" she cried.

"Yes," said Taunton, "we have found out."

Mrs. Claymoore groaned.

"To think it should end so! To think of it!" she murmured.

"Dear lady, no one could foresee it."

"Foresee it? I should think not, indeed!"

"And no one is in anyway to blame."

"How can you say it? And to marry her own cousin too! It's horrible!"

"Her cousin?" exclaimed the girl. "Auntie, do explain."

"I thought you understood, you said so!"

"It was something else we understood," Taunton said; and at the words Mrs. Claymoore sat suddenly erect and gazed searchingly at them. Her face softened, grew tender, beamed.

"Upon—my soul!" she gasped, "who would have guessed at such a thing?"

"But I don't understand," Miss Neill protested. "Who is going to marry her cousin?"

"Why, Alexia! the girl who never changes," said Mrs. Claymoore with a sly glance at Taunton. "He is a lieutenant, and he has been ordered off to some atrocious climate. She couldn't bear to have him go alone, and at the last minute she married him and went along. It's all in the morning paper. Anne Dunbar was gasping over it when I got back to the hotel. I thought I'd come and break it to you before you reached that group of curious women down there on the hotel porch. They imagine pretty much as I did—that you'd be terribly cut up over it."

Taunton had the voluble lady's hands in his and was wringing them.

"Ask Kittye," he said, and over her agitated bonnet bows his eyes met the girl's and lingered on them.

RADIUM

BY JOHN HALL INGHAM

THE All-Master sealed a symbol of His might
 Within a stone, and to a woman's eye
 Revealed the wonder. Lo, infinity
 Wrapped in an atom—molecules of light
 Outshining centuries! No mortal sight
 May fathom in this grain the galaxy
 Of suns, moons, planets, hurled unceasingly
 Out of their glowing system into the night.

O Man, thou scheme so marvellously planned
 Of passions, hopes, desires, imaginings,—
 Think not they burn within thy blood alone!—
 They radiate from the eye, the lip, the hand,
 In look, word, deed—that, fading, soon are gone
 Or flash unto the eternal verge of things.

SOME WORDS THAT WENT HOME

By the Editor



"THIS trainload of men wield a greater influence in the education of America than all the schools and colleges put together."

Such is the phrase uttered by the best of American Art Critics as he conversed over his luncheon in the luxurious train flying between New York, Philadelphia, and Washington on April 7, in this year of our Lord 1904. It was the special express chartered by the "Periodical Publishers' Association of America" for itself and its honored guests who were to dine at the capital in the company of the President of the United States.

That there happened to be two hundred diners, more or less; that there were some notable and regrettable absentees, does not count. The Best Art Critic's words would have been just as true of half the number, for he spoke of the monthlies and weeklies as a whole—and he spoke the truth!

To the monthly and weekly periodicals of this country the people owe incalculable good. This is too often overlooked in the mere enjoyment brought to a large part of the thirty million homes that make (or could break) these United States—make us because they choose to be loyal and right; break us if they should choose to be treacherous and wrong. That they cleave to plain-living and high-thinking is in no minor degree due to the magazines.

Of course, there is brightness. That is the direct mission of the monthlies and weeklies. They are aimed at entertainment, and they rarely fail to hit the target. Then, too, they are aimed well in some cases at national harms, and in others at bringing instruction to the remote and unfriended, as in the case mentioned by the German Ambassador in his admirable speech. He knew a Samoan chief who showed unwonted familiarity with his people's history.

"I asked him," said Baron von Sternburg, "if there was any literature in Samoa."

"No," he answered, then took from an old ship's chest a rather dilapidated American magazine. "This book," he said, "gives us all

we have of Samoan history. It even tells us much that we have forgotten."

But, whether as agencies of rational fun or as wholesome teachers, the magazines too seldom get credit for that larger national service of education which the Best Art Critic emphasized over his dish of sweetbreads. They are instructors in a high sense, because their instruction is not of the sort which requires a surgical operation to introduce it into the intellect; it is not addressed to adolescence, but subtly, quietly, unintentionally, around the evening lamp, in the hammock under the green leaves, on the rattling train, the lesson of good taste, high aim, and righteous principle is taught.

This was what Mr. Roosevelt meant when he greeted the two hundred diners in words which bit into the sense and stayed there. Said he:

"It is always a pleasure to a man in public life to meet the *real governing classes*. I wish to bid you welcome to Washington and to say but a word of greeting, and that word shall take the form of a warning and a hope. I did not speak in jest when I alluded to you as representatives of the governing classes. I think that we of the United States cannot keep too fresh in our minds the fact that the men responsible for the government are not the representatives of the people, but the people themselves, and that therefore heavy is the responsibility that lies upon the people and upon all those who do most towards shaping the thought of the people.

"Now in the days of my youth I was a literary man. I have recently in reading a book been immensely struck by the thought developed in it by one of our greatest scholars who was speaking of freedom and of the fact that freedom could not exist unless there went with it a sense of responsibility, and he used a phrase somewhat like this:

"'That among all peoples there must be a restraint; if there is no restraint, there is, for an inevitable result, anarchy, which is the negation of all government.'

"Therefore there must be restraint. A free people has merely substituted self-restraint for external restraint, and the permanence of our freedom as a people and of our liberty depends upon the way in which we shall exercise that self-restraint.

"Law—there must be more than good laws to make a good people. A man whose morality is expressed merely in the non-infringement of the law is a pretty poor creature. Unless our average citizenship is based upon a good deal more than mere observance of the laws on the statute books, then our average citizenship can never produce the kind

of government which it must and will produce. So far from liberty and the responsibility of self-government being things which come easily and to any people, they are peculiarly things that can come only to the most highly developed people, capable not only of mastering others, but of mastering themselves, and who can achieve real self-government, real liberty.

"For that cultivation of the spirit of self-restraint which is the spirit of self-reliance we must rely in no small degree upon those who furnish so much of the thought of the great bulk of our people who think most, and therefore, Gentlemen, in greeting you here to-night I wish not merely to welcome you, but to say that I trust every man of you feels the weight of the responsibility that rests upon him. The man who writes, the man who month in and month out, week in and week out, day in and day out, furnishes the material which is to shape the thoughts of our people is essentially the man who more than any other determines the character of the people and the kind of government this people shall possess. I believe in the future of this people. I believe in the growth and greatness of this country, because I believe that you and those like you approach their tasks in the proper spirit—not always, but as a rule."

✱

It should be as widely known as the magazines can make it that there exists an organization amongst them for mutual and for national good. They are now banded together in a fellowship whose office is a patriotic, if also a business, one, and the fruits of this are visible for the first time in the fraternity flowing from united action, in the breaking of bread (and perhaps of some bottles) together, and in the international sentiments aroused which were reflected in the speech of the French Ambassador, M. Jusserand, who, himself a distinguished author, spoke to the authors and editors with whom he dined some pregnant words.

✱

"I am proud," said he, "of the opportunity offered me to address this brilliant assembly, an assembly of men who enjoy the most honorable ancestry that can be dreamt of. One who has for his ancestors Defoe, Steele, Addison, Johnson, Prevost, Diderot, Marivaux, Voltaire, and the author of "Poor Richard's Almanacs" need not fear comparison. Such is the case with you all. You can think with the more satisfaction of your ancestors as you are earnestly continuing their traditions. . . .

"I hope it is not disparaging to any one to say that newspapers are more like a drink, and periodical publications more like a food—

a drink sometimes sparkling and sometimes cheering, a drink that may elate or may not, according to the circumstances. All honor to those who pour, day after day, the drink that cheers and does not inebriate.

"But you give us food. Great is your responsibility. You bear it cheerfully, for you know quite well, and it is a conspicuous quality of yours, that you can stand the test of even the new pure food law which is being prepared by the august assembly on the hill opposite. . . .

"One thing I shall add. Owing to you all, Gentlemen, America is better known in Europe, and especially in my country, better appreciated every day, her mind and genius, her landscapes and scenery. No one can follow the main streets in Paris without his sight being attracted by a number of American magazines for which there is a public demand among us. In simply passing along, scenes of American life, landscapes in Virginia and Massachusetts, in distant Alaska, and, near to our hearts, New Orleans, offer themselves to the eye, depicted with a charm and cleverness which is your artists' own. Many who look cannot refrain from saying: 'If we could be there! If we could see this!' And many come and see.

"You do good work indeed, and I am glad to offer you, at this day, congratulations from a country which has ever had a sympathetic feeling for American art, American thinkers, and, I may say, the American nation."

There were other stirring speeches from names we all know, but it will suffice to say that in each mouth the magazine found praise. Senator Beveridge, of Indiana, well asserted that "the greatest things in literature are those that have been appreciated first by the masses." Mr. Hopkinson Smith advanced with his trained judgment the claims of the American Illustrator,—the best the world has produced,—and to our magazines, said he, the world owes him.

There is always good in getting together; but in business it took us ages to find this out. The old way was secretive, suspicious, Ismaelitish. You herded by yourself and let out no friendly sunshine, no human kindness. All this is changed now. The world of business has learned that it even pays better to be friendly to the guild. A very able editor said the other day:

"I lay my cards frankly on the table, and I expect the other fellow to do the same."

And he does!

WALNUTS and WINE

Watson Tells a Story

WATSON likes to tell a story, and he is aware of the fact that he tells one uncommonly well when he can tell it in his own way. But this privilege is not always accorded him when Mrs. Watson is around, and she was with him at a delightful little dinner-party the Rayburns were giving the other evening. Watson was in his best story-telling mood and he had a capital new story to tell. He was sure that no one at the table but Mrs. Watson had heard it. He awaited his opportunity, and during a lull in the general conversation he began with:

"Oh, by the way, I heard a capital little story at the club the other evening. It is a new Hebrew story Charley Dwight told me. He said that——"

"Why, Mr. Watson, I thought it was Harry Ross who told you that story?" interrupted Mrs. Watson.

"No, my dear, it was Dwight who told it to me. He said——"

"I am quite sure that you said it was Harry Ross who told you the story when you told it to me. Is it the story about the two Jews at a dinner-party, and one of them——"

"Yes, yes, it is that story, and Dwight said that——"

"I remember very distinctly that you said it was Mr. Ross. You know you said that he——"

"Well, well, perhaps I did say Ross when I meant Dwight. Ross was present. But it don't matter which one told the story."

"Of course not, only it is best to be accurate."

"Dwight said that——"

"You mean Ross."

"Well, Ross said that a couple of Sheenys were——"

"Don't say 'Sheenys,' dear, it sounds so disrespectful"

"I don't mean any disrespect, and——"

"It is always best to say what one means, and 'Sheeny' is not only disrespectful, but it is vulgar."

"Well, these two Jews, Goldstein and Rosenbaum, were at a dinner-party, and——"

"You said their names were Schloss and Strauss when you told me the story."

"Oh, the names don't matter."

"I suppose not, but, as I say, it is best to be accurate."

"Dwight said that these Jews were at a dinner-party, and——"

"I thought it was a public banquet, dear?" said Mrs. Watson gently.

"Oh, well, what's the difference? Anyhow——"

"There is a good deal of difference between a dinner-party and a public banquet."

"Very well, call it a banquet then."

"I wouldn't if it wasn't a banquet."

"Anyhow, there were solid silver spoons on the table, and——"

"Then it must have been a dinner-party. One never sees solid silver at a public banquet."

"I didn't say it was a public banquet."

"I didn't say that you did, my dear boy."

"Well, the point of the story is that during the progress of the dinner Goldstein took one of the solid silver spoons and slipped it into his shoe, and——"

"I don't see how he could have done that unobserved," remarked Mrs. Watson.

"He did, according to the way the story goes, and——"

"It don't seem reasonable."

"Lots of good stories are unreasonable. Rosenbaum saw Goldstein put the spoon into his shoe, and——"

"Oh, it wasn't that way. You are getting ahead of the story. When you told it to me you said——"

"I am telling it just as Dwight told it to me. He said——"

"Don't you remember that you said Dwight said—only it was Ross—that Goldstein—only I'm quite confident you said the name was Strauss—that he said before putting the spoon into his shoe, 'Ladies and gentlemen, I——'"

"No, no, no! It was Rosenbaum who said that when he got a spoon a little later. He said——"

"It don't seem to me that that was the way of it. I am quite sure that——"

What she was "quite sure" of remains a mystery to this day, for at that moment the hostess gave the signal for the guests to rise, and the story Watson had privately rehearsed in his room was never told, and this is no place in which to divulge what Watson said to his wife on their homeward way.

J. L. Harbour.

**A Philadel-
phia Fear**

"Your husband has water on the brain," announced the doctor.

"Dear me!" she said, "I hope it has been boiled."

W. D. Nesbit.

HURRAH FOR SPRING

By Grace G. Bostwick

SPRING—she's come agen;

Less whoop an' yell an' sing.

It makes a feller feel so good

An' glad he's young, by Jing!

Th' boys is playin' marbles

Down by th' old town-pump,

An' th' girls is so dern sassy

That it makes yer old heart thump;

Th' ploughs is in th' medders,

A-turnin' up th' sod,

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Walnuts and Wine

An' th' birds is jest a-singin'
 All they can, a-praisin' God;
 Th' young colts in th' paster
 Are a-kickin' up the'r heels,
 An' th' cows stan' there a-thinkin'
 How good th' warm breeze feels;
 Green things is pokin' up the'r heads,
 A-reachin' fer th' sun,
 An' th' frogs down in th' marsh is
 A-rejoicin' ever' one;
 Th' smell of earth is in th' air,
 That same old, growin' smell,
 You snuff it up an' laugh fer joy,
 Becuz yer live an' well
 An' kickin' still—an' then—
 Hurrah! Spring's come agen.

**The Retort
 Courteous**

A CHARACTERISTIC story of the late President is told by a well-known army officer. He took a beautiful young woman to the first army and navy reception given at the White House during Mr. McKinley's administration, and the crowd was an unusually large one. Just before they reached the receiving party the girl turned, and seeing the long line still to pass murmured sympathetically, "Poor President!"

Mr. McKinley's quick ear caught the remark, and as he held out his hand to her, with one of his rare, sweet smiles, he replied, "Happy President!"

Florence Louise Hart.

**The
 King's Wine**

IN 1860, during his visit as Prince of Wales, King Edward was received with much distinction at Harvard College, notably by President Felton, who was a natural worshipper of greatness in every shape. The welcome included a lunch to the Prince and his suite, at which everything moved on smoothly enough until the principal guest innocently asked for champagne. Here was an unforeseen dilemma, for the banquet was based entirely on temperance principles, and there was nothing to drink but that everlasting lemonade, flanked by tea and coffee. Little time was available for reflection, but it suddenly occurred to President Felton that there was a store of champagne in his own cellar. So, beckoning to a senior who happened to be near, he sent him with a message to Mrs. Felton, asking her to dispatch a bottle as soon as possible. The President, thus happily relieved at having saved the situation, set himself to entertain his guest during the inevitable delay. But the result of his manœuvres was not in the least what he had expected. Mrs. Felton quickly jumped at a conclusion with disastrous effects, and "the true Prince" got no champagne that day. When the senior submitted his message, which was merely verbal, she at first looked dubious and then replied, "Ah, the President sent you for champagne, did he? Well, you'll have none from me. I know students pretty well, and I am familiar with all their tricks, so you'd

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better be off." The messenger promptly followed this advice, and thus shared the defeat of President Felton.

This little contretemps is probably unique in all his Majesty's experience, as it is very doubtful if on any other occasion he asked for a glass of wine and failed to get it.

Howard Payson Arnold.

**The
Real Boss**

THE night after Mulhaney was relieved of the section foremanship the new boss came. The crew of the "Irish local" formed their silent conclusions at the supper-table, and later, over their pipes, agreed to start right by propitiating as far as possible Mr. Michael O'Brien.

On the following morning, while that gentleman was yet stowing away vast quantities of eggs and bacon, the men left a hurried breakfast and, proceeding to the car-house, performed the unusual feat of placing the hand-car upon the siding before seven o'clock. Then they loaded up the tools and buckets and waited.

When O'Brien came, carrying his dinner-pail and with his coat slung turridly about his shoulders, he paused with an inquiring look at the car.

"Who *put* that cair on the thrack?"

The crew glanced at one another, at the car, and back at O'Brien. Marty J. Flynn swallowed part of his chew and made answer,—

"We did."

"Take that cair *aff* the thrack!"

The wheels crunched in the cinder and the men straightened up.

"*Now*, put that cair *on* the thrack. *I'll* show ye who's boss 'round here!"

Winfield S. Ruhl.

**Christine's
Conscience**

CHRISTINE was the young daughter of a professor in a Western university and had acquired from the students a picturesque vocabulary. The kitten with which she was playing one morning displeased her, and she exclaimed, "Oh, you blanked, blanked little kitten!" Thereupon her mother led her to her bedroom, washed out her mouth with soap and water, then touched it with quinine. "It is very bitter, my daughter," said the troubled parent, "but the taste of those bad words you have spoken is far worse." On the following day the kitten again displeased Christine, and she muttered something inaudible. "Christine!" said her mother warningly. "I didn't say it, momma," declared the culprit. "No, I kept the words shut up tight; but it's the very same kind of little kitten it was yesterday."

M. B. S.

TENNIS

By Clinton Platt

SHE was a novice at the game

And he an ardent teacher.

Then mischief Cupid slyly came

To tempt the lovely creature.

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Walnuts and Wine

"Oh Jack, don't bother more with me—
I fear I'm far too stupid."

And on the court in heartless glee
Chuckled triumphant Cupid.

"Success were certain, Mabel, dear,
If we shared our joys and troubles."

What Mabel said I failed to hear:
They've entered in the doubles.

Shutting the
Barn Door

HARRY had been forbidden by his grandfather to play with the pump, which play invariably ended in a drenching. The one way to prevent this catastrophe often proved to be tying up the pump. Once the old gentleman heard a great splashing and spluttering in the back yard and ran out in haste to the rescue.

A half-drowned Harry met him, hastening towards the house as fast as his soaked feet would carry him. "Oh dran'pa," he called in a voice that seemed drowned too, "tie up the plump! tie up the plump."

J. D.

MAMIE'S PRAYER

By Norman H. Pitman

IN prayer she knelt at mother's knee,
The darling little Mamie,
And whispered, softly as could be,
Her well-known "Now I lay me."

And then, to make her prayer complete,
She added, somewhat louder,
"Dear God, please make me good and sweet,
And pure as baking-powder."

Rivals

SHAKESPEARE was giving a performance. "No," he said as he stood in the wings, "I haven't any fear of eggs; it's Bacon I have to look out for."

McLandburgh Wilson.

AN ALASKA HOMESTEAD

By George Hyde Preston

HE took up a claim on a field of ice,
And farmed on an avalanche;
He thawed out seed in a frying-pan
To plant his Alaska ranch.

He ploughed his fields with a rotary plough;
Drilled holes in the ground for the seed;



Young' Man

If you intend to win out in life you will need a clearer head and steadier nerves than the coffee drinker usually has.

Science tells us plainly that coffee contains elements which directly attack the heart, kidneys, nerves, and cause indigestion and many other ills.

You can have a hot beverage with the coffee flavor and rich color without any of the bad effects of coffee if you will shift to well boiled **POSTUM COFFEE**, the food drink, delicious when properly made (that's easy), and absolutely free from the Caffein and other nerve-killing elements of coffee.

Read the little book "The Road to Wellville" you will find in every package of

POSTUM.

P. S. Discuss this coffee question in the family and observe the experience of each.

Walnuts and Wine

Then, donning his snow-shoes, started out,
And put in his crops with speed.

The farm looked well by the Northern Lights,
And the farmer's hopes were high;
But by some mischance he was frozen to death
While hoeing on Fourth of July.

**A
Firm Stand**

THE mild business man was calmly reading his paper in the crowded trolley-car. In front of him stood a little woman hanging by a strap. Her arm was being slowly torn out of her body, her eyes were flashing at him, but she constrained herself to silence.

Finally, after he had endured it for twenty minutes, he touched her arm and said,—

"Madame, you are standing on my foot."

"Oh, am I?" she savagely retorted; "I thought it was a valise."

Buts S.

Early Piety

SIX-YEAR-OLD MARGARET looked up from the history she was conning. "Frederick the Great," she announced in a shocked voice, "was untrue to his wife, even to the extent of writing verses to another woman."

J. D.

**What a Bull
is For**

MARIE and her little brother, Phil, were standing off the porch looking into a neighboring pasture, where there was an unusually fierce and unruly Jersey bull.

"I wonder," said Phil speculatively, "what a bull is for, anyway? he don't give milk."

"Why," said Marie from the depths of her elder-sister experience, "that's not hard to tell. He is meant to keep folks out of the pasture, to be sure!"

Florida C. Orr.

A FASHIONABLE BEAR

By Frank Roe Batchelder

ROB teased us so persistently
We took him to the show—
"Not for the circus, but to see
The animals," you know.

At every cage within the tent
He lingered long, to stare;
He watched the beasts with wonderment,
But, most of all, the bear.

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Styles Originated by My Expert Model Maker are Copied Everywhere.

W. L. Douglas \$3.50 shoes have by their excellent style, easy-fitting and superior wearing qualities achieved the largest sale of any \$3.50 shoe in the world. They are just as good as those that cost you \$5 to \$7 — the only difference is the price. If I could take you into my factory at Brockton, Mass., the largest in the world under one roof making men's fine shoes, and show you the infinite care with which every pair of Douglas shoes is made, you would realize why W. L. Douglas \$3.50 shoes are the best shoes produced anywhere.

If I could show you the difference between the shoes made in my factory and those of other makes, you would understand why Douglas \$3.50 shoes cost more to make, why they hold their shape, fit better, wear longer, and are of greater intrinsic value than any other \$3.50 shoe on the market to-day.

There is a great difference between wholesale and retail prices in shoes. You pay only one profit on shoes made in my factory and sold direct to you through my own stores in the principal cities. The result is, you get better shoes for the price than are retailed elsewhere.

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He should have a pair of Lace Shoes for cold and rainy weather; a pair of Oxfords for warm, sunny days, and a pair of Patent Corona Button Shoes for dress or street wear. Don't pay \$15 to \$18 for these three pairs; you can get as much style, comfort and service in three pairs of Douglas shoes for \$10.50.

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W. L. Douglas \$3.50 shoes are sold through his own retail stores in the principal cities, and shoe dealers everywhere. No matter where you live, Douglas shoes are within your reach. If you desire further information before purchasing, write for Illustrated Catalog.

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Walnuts and Wine

"You seem to like the bear," said I,
 And Robbie made retort:
 "I like him, but I don't see why
 They docked his tail so short."

Only a
Fragment

MARSHALL P. WILDER says that a friend of his who has a decided aversion to being shaved by a barber was recently obliged, by reason of a sprained wrist, to entrust himself to the mercies of a member of the tonsorial guild.

As luck would have it, he encountered a by no means gentle operator, so that Wilder's friend was kept continually remonstrating with the barber for the strenuous fashion employed in removing the beard. To cap the climax, the man managed to clip off a piece of an ear. Whereupon the friend of Mr. Wilder waxed exceeding wroth, exclaiming:

"You've got the ear, now! You've got the ear!"

But the barber was not in the least flustered. "Only a little piece, sir," he said apologetically; "not enough to affect the hearing, sir!"

Edwin Tarrisse.

A CLEAR GAIN

By Arthur Hall

THERE once was a girl in New Haven,
 Who on economics went a-ravin'.

When asked why her clock

Was permitted to stop,

She said, "Look at the time it is savin'."

At Odds

BROWN stopped at the farmer's front gate.

"Paw at home?" he asked of the boy at play in the yard.

"Nop," drawled the boy, "gone to the canyon."

"Gone a-foot?" asked Brown.

"Nop," answered the lad, "about a mile."

Kathleen A. Tarbox.

A Presiden-
tial Preroga-
tive

A CHARITABLE woman in the northwest section of the Capital City was giving a very unaccustomed treat to a wandering waif of tender years who had come to her door asking for bread—the usual plea, with the mental addition of meat and other fixings. Seated at the kitchen table, the small guest had a bowl of steaming bean-soup before him, and was enjoying it as only a hungry lad can. He was too busy at first to be very sociable, but as the edge of his appetite wore off he, being a bright little fellow, began talking to his benefactress. He had just passed the White House, and as his mind reverted to the beauties of the place he asked several questions about it



BABY'S TOILET

A baby's skin—the most delicate texture in all this world, and the most easily injured. How soft, and pure, and white it is on a well-kept child. Not all the silken fabrics of the East can delight a mother half so much as that most perfect of all fabrics—her baby's skin.

So sensitive is it that a mistake in the baby's bath, an alkali soap, for instance, is fatal to its health and beauty. Almost instantly rash, blotches, and worse blemishes will appear. The safest soap to use is

RESINOL SOAP

Mild and kindly in effect, it immediately restores the skin to its original sweetness and purity. It promptly cures milk crust, scald head, itching, chafing, incipient eczema and other childish ailments of the skin.

Resinol Soap keeps the skin in a thoroughly healthy condition, cleansing, lubricating and nourishing it.

It makes the mother's complexion nearly as smooth and brilliant as the baby's skin. It prevents blackheads, pimples, chapped hands, feter, dandruff, and other skin troubles. It does this because it contains the same medicinal properties as are found in the world-famous Resinol Ointment.

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and its occupants. Then, with a long sigh of satisfaction as the last spoonful disappeared, he inquired,—

"Do Muster Roosevelt git a lot fur bein' President?"

"Yes, he is paid fifty thousand dollars a year," the lady replied.

"My!" exclaimed he; "the President can hev a'most anything he wants, can't he? S'pose he hez bean-soup every single day!"

Margaret Sullivan Burke.

WHEN BETSY SEWS

By Mary Stuart Bell

When Betsy starts to sew,
I wonder where they go—
The needles and pins and all such things—
When Betsy starts to sew?

When Betsy starts to sew,
Dear me! then all is woe,—
The scissors lost and household crossed,—
When Betsy starts to sew.

When Betsy starts to sew,
Now, friends, you all must know
These times are rare, so don't despair
When Betsy starts to sew.

A Little Girl's Loves BESSIE (aged five) was accustomed to come to her mother's room before the family was up. One Sunday morning, while making the customary visit, the odors of breakfast in preparation managed to reach the sleeping-quarters. Bessie, with her arms round her mother's neck, gave one or two vigorous sniffs, then with an air of anticipation announced, "Mamma, there's two fings I dess love mos' of eny fing in der world."

"What are they, Bessie?" asked her mamma.

"God and baked beans," Bessie replied, smacking her lips.

Eric Outwolve.

Utterly Im-possible

UNCLE DANIEL HARMON's pastor was a vigorous temperance advocate. For years and years he had preached to the old man about the virtues of total abstinence, but had never succeeded in convincing his parishioner that it was wisest and best for him to part company with the "cussid stuff." At last one day, after long persuasion, the minister managed to extract from the old man a promise that he would not drink another drop. The Saturday night following the day on which this promise was ob-



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tained the parson met Uncle Dan on the street with a basket of groceries in one hand and a tell-tale "little brown jug" in the other.

"What you got in dat jug, Uncle Dan?" asked the parson.

"It's liquor!" exclaimed the old man; "it's liquor. It sho' is liquor, an' I ain't gwinetah lie 'bout it."

"Whose liquor is it?" inquired the minister.

"It b'longs to me an' Deacon Walkah—me an' Deacon Walkah, sah," said Uncle Dan, looking the questioner straight in the eye.

"Bruddah Harmon, you ain't forgot yo' promus so soon, is you?" asked Rev. Mickins. Uncle Dan made no reply.

"Set dat jug down—set it right down," commanded the parson, "an' po' dat whiskey right out on de groun'!"

The old man put the basket and the jug down. Then, straightening up, he said,—

"Bruddah Pastah, you knows I tries to 'bey you in ev'yt'ing—I sho' do; but I don't think you'd want me to follah yo' ohdahs in dis mattah ef I tol' you it would cause me to treat Deacon Walkah wrong."

"I don't see," protested the preacher, "how you'd be treatin' Deacon Walkah wrong by po'in' out dat liquor."

"Ain't I done tol' you," explained Uncle Dan, "dat me an' Deacon Walkah went 'in cahoots' in buyin' dis liquor—dat ha'f uv it b'longs to him an' de uddah ha'f b'longs to me?"

"Dat's so," said Rev. Mickins, "dat's so, Uncle Dan; well, den, you po' out yo' ha'f—I reckon you kin do dat!"

"Dat's onpossible," said Uncle Dan, "dat's onpossible; I can't po' out my ha'f 'dout po'in' out Deacon Walkah's ha'f."

"How's dat?" asked the preacher. "How's dat?"

"'Cause," said the old man, "Deacon Walkah's ha'f's on top, an' mine at de bottom!"

Silas Xavier Floyd.

Condensed Sentiment

THE English custom of abbreviating familiar phrases by using the initial letter of each word is one of the first to arouse the interest, and occasionally the amusement, of Americans.

"R. I. P.," signifying "Rest in peace," is frequently inscribed on monuments; and recently on a very old stone a tourist discovered an epitaph which read something like this:

"Here lieth my beloved wife,

ELIZABETH ANNE,

Born——— Died———


Let her R I P."

Margaret Jewett.

OSCAR JOHNSON, colored, was being interviewed by a reporter in regard to a disturbance which had occurred at a social function where Oscar had acted as floor-manager.

"I suttinly did all any genelman could do to stop dat row," declared Mr. Johnson earnestly, "but the police ob dis city was not wif me. I runs down

Not Excitable



MENNEN'S

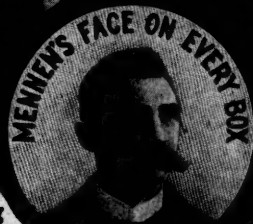
BORATED TALCUM

TOILET POWDER

A Positive Relief for
**Prickly Heat,
Chafing and
Sunburn**

and all afflictions of the skin.
Delightful after shaving.
Removes all odor of perspiration. **SAMPLE FREE.**

GERHARD MENNEN CO.
NEWARK, N. J.



Something
New

MENNEN'S VIOLET TALCUM

Something
Exquisite

Lumbard Street lookin' foah a cop, and I runs down Katherine Street; but it was a cold night and dey was all baked in. At las' I sees a cop standin' on de corner of Ate and Fitchwater an' I runs up, pantin'. 'Foah Gawd's sake,' I say, 'Mistah Cop, come up to Lumbard Street; dey's a lady layin' up dar wif her froat cut.' What you think dat cop do? Dat cop look at me jess as if he was mad for bein' interrupted, an' he says, 'G'wan, dat's off my beat.'"

Caroline Lockhart.

Broker.—"The doctor says that I should eat food that will build up my system. Is there anything that you would suggest?"

Joker.—"Have you ever tried ice-cream bricks?"

W. A. Clarke.

Her First A SMALL boy, aged five, had a stepmother who was young and nervous. She had never had experience with children, and the small boy's slightest ailment tortured her into a panic.

Croup threatened one day, and the doctor was sent for in wild haste. As the doctor entered the room the child raised his head from his pillow and croaked hoarsely, in apology for the hasty summons,—

"You must excuse her, doctor, this is the first time she's ever been a mother."

Helen Sherman Griffith.

A HAT-PIN

ALL ABOUT IT

By Harold Melbourne

Oh, Reginald Van Buren lived

A very happy life,

Until one day a gift he bought

And gave it to his wife.

The gift was just a hat-pin, but

The head was an odd tint,

A sort of brown enamel with

A lovely reddish glint.

Was Reggie's wife delighted? Well,

Delighted!—she was that!

She cried, "To match this hat-pin, why,

I'll have to have a hat!"

She got a hat to match the pin;

To match the hat, a veil;

And now we are but started on

This very thrilling tale.

To match the veil she got some gloves;

To match the gloves, a purse;



SHREDDED WHOLE WHEAT

is made into two forms—BISCUIT and TRISCUIT.

The BISCUIT—served with milk or cream—is the World's Standard Cereal Food for Morning, Noon and Night. It has greater utility than any other food because it can be prepared in over 250 different ways in combination with fruits, vegetables, preserves and other articles of food for any table course.

TRISCUIT is the New Cracker and succeeds bread, toast and wafers. It is served with soups, preserves, cheese and beverages. Make Triscuit Your Daily Bread.

We will send FREE, our Illustrated Cook Book,
"The Vital Question." Write today.

THE NATURAL FOOD COMPANY,

Makers of Shredded Whole Wheat Products.

NIAGARA FALLS, N. Y.



Walnuts and Wine'

And from that moment, really,
Things went from bad to worse.

To match the purse she got a skirt;
To match the skirt, a waist;
To match the waist she got a cloak:
All chosen with good taste

To match the hat-pin. Then she bought
Innumerable things,
From lingerie to things you see,
From shoestrings up to rings.

To match this toilette all complete
The parlor was arranged;
To match the parlor, next the house
From basement up was changed.

But when this transformation-scene
Was finished and complete,
The dear dame thought the dwelling-place
Was better than the street.

And so she found a street to match
Her dwelling and her gown;
And then "Alas, alack!" she cried,
"The street don't match the town!"

Poor Reginald Van Buren stormed,
While Mrs. Reggie cried;
She had hysterics, got quite ill,
And pined away, and died.

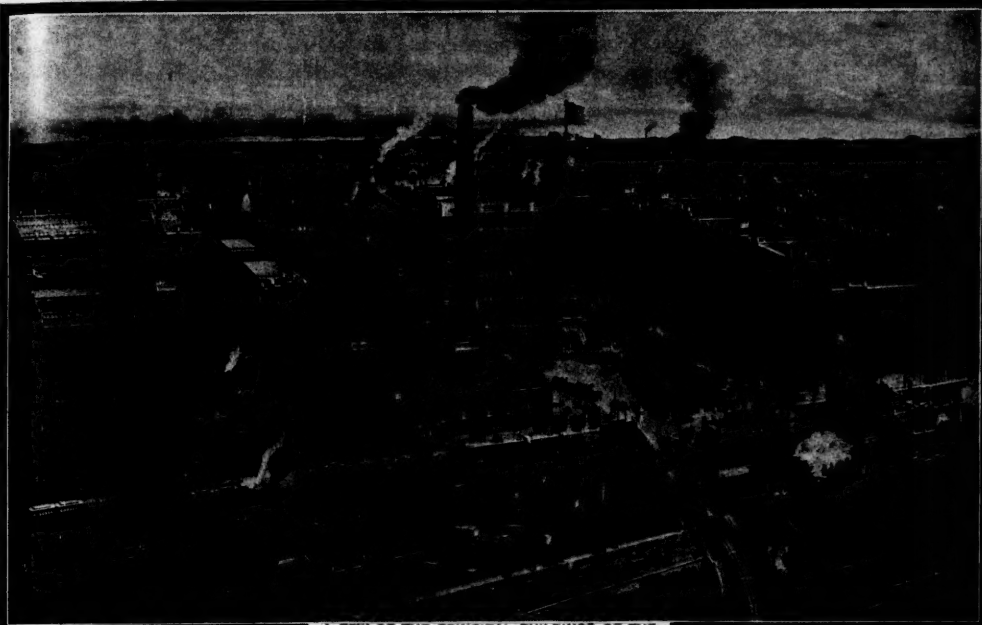
L'ENVOI:

So, husbands, now take warning'all,
Unless you'd live in strife,
Give any mortal present but
A hat-pin to your wife.

Ready Wit

It may seem rather trite to go back to Civil War times for a story, but all the tales of that memorable time have not been told, and as this one was a personal experience of a relative of mine I can vouch for it. I have never seen it in print nor heard anyone else tell it.

My uncle, Major Thomas Ridgely, was a surgeon attached to General Grant's staff. It was after the surrender of Vicksburg. The Union forces had entered the city and much merrymaking and entertaining were going on. One night a dinner was in progress at which many Northern officers and a large number of Southern ladies were present. Many toasts had been proposed and



A FEW OF THE PRINCIPAL BUILDINGS OF THE
ANHEUSER-BUSCH PLANT
COVERS 125 ACRES EQUALS 60 CITY BLOCKS EMPLOYS 5000 PEOPLE

VISITORS TO THE
LOUISIANA PURCHASE EXPOSITION
ARE CORDIALLY INVITED
TO INSPECT THE
ANHEUSER-BUSCH BREWERY
WHERE COMPETENT GUIDES
SPEAKING ALL MODERN LANGUAGES
WILL BE AT THEIR SERVICE

ANHEUSER-BUSCH BREWING ASS'N
ST. LOUIS, U. S. A.

drunk, all of them practically in honor of the successes of the Union army and the men responsible for them.

Finally one of the Southern ladies, a great beauty and noted for her intense partisan feeling for the South, arose and said, "Gentlemen, may I propose a toast?"

With natural gallantry and a little trepidation the ranking officer said, "Certainly."

"Well, then, gentlemen, I give you, 'The Southern Confederacy.'"

It was an embarrassing situation. But with hardly a moment's hesitation one of the Northern officers relieved the tension.

"Down with it, gentlemen," he cried; and the glasses were drained without embarrassment and without disloyalty.

Francis H. Lee.

THE WRONG TREE

By E. D. Pierson

WHERE the green branches interlace
He stood with eager, anxious face
And folded hands, imploring-wise,
Searching the blue deeps of her eyes.

"Dearest," he said, "at least I bring
To your pure shrine the offering
Of an unsullied heart. My days
Were never passed in worldly ways.

"For this I hold, that each man should
(Who wooes some star of womanhood)
Be ev'n as virtuous as she,
Else he insults her purity.

"So have I lived aloof from all
Those who hold nightly festival,
And scorned the cup of wine, the song,
And sins that with such things belong."

He breathless paused. Her silence meant,
He thought, a sign of sweet consent.
"Pooh!" and she raised her regal head,
"What a dull time you must have led!"

**The Old-Liner
Guides of
Washington**

THE statue of Lafayette was pointed out a few days ago by one of the old-liner coachmen to his fares:

"Yer see thet er statute o' Washin'ton, suh? He war a monst'us fine gemmun. Er war monst'us fon' er chillun, en dem as er stan'in' roun' him war his 'dapted chilluns. Dat's him er sho', cos' I war in his *regimunt*. Dem little chilluns er 'dapted is grow'd up now.

EDISON GOLD RECORDS

MOULDED

HERE'S THE FUN—But when you buy cheap records and know you are losing the pleasure that those who use EDISON GOLD MOULDED RECORDS are having—when you have to apologize to your friends for imperfect results—Where's the Fun?

TRADE
Thomas A. Edison
 MARK

New Records every week in the latest catalogue

I. C. S. Language course taught by EDISON PHONOGRAPHS

THE EDISON PHONOGRAPH

NATIONAL PHONOGRAPH COMPANY, ORANGE, N. J.
 NEW YORK, CHICAGO, SAN FRANCISCO, LONDON

"On ter side er Pa'k er Monsum Shambow. Er monst'us fine gemmun. Er sot der fashion er eatin' frogs roun' heah.

"'Fo' my time? Dat wot yo' sa's? Law, na, suh, I war in his *regimunt*."

E. Hovey-King.

Too Gay A NOMADIC evangelist with sincere religious zeal was holding a revival service in a rude little log school-house in the backwoods.

On one of the front benches sat a small, fallow, and spiritless looking elderly man with a fringe of gray beard hanging from ear to ear beneath his chin, and a face that would have won him the reputation of being "meeker than Moses."

A few seats farther back sat a big, brawny, and pugilistic fellow who would have been an ornament to the Bowery. He had evidently come for the purpose of humiliating the preacher by breaking up the meeting. Hardly had the preacher announced his text, when the beefy-looking mischief-maker began to utter cat-calls and whistle with two of his dirty fingers thrust into his bearded mouth.

"May I ask our brother to be a little more mindful of the occasion?" said the preacher meekly.

"Aw, yaas, me covey, you may ask 'our brother' to do anything yer a mind to, but that ain't sayin' 'our brother' will do it by a long shot, fer——"

Something shot through the air like a panther leaping on its prey. It was the "meek-as-Moses" little old man on the front seat. He collared the obstreperous bully, yanked him from his seat regardless of his cries of "Ouch! You quit that, now! I was jess foolin', I tell ye!" and, dragging him to the door, flung him out into a snowdrift. Returning to his seat the little old man said calmly.

"Perceed on, an' if anyone else here wants to git too gay, jess let 'em try it on, an' I'll send 'em out to kam down in the snowdrift along with Buck Byler."

M. W.

GIVE THE LIVING A CHANCE

By George Birdseye

"SAY nothing but good of the dead!"

How often we've heard that said,

And it's all very well as it goes,

But why not extend it to those

Who haven't yet turned up their toes?

**Ignorant of
its Use**

OLD Doctor Miskelli, of the Red Bank neighborhood, was very fond of chewing tobacco, and he was, moreover, a bit careless as to where he expectorated.

On one occasion he had called at the home of Mrs. Simmons, an old lady who believed that cleanliness comes next to Godliness. This lady, knowing

PORES!

WHY TAKE DAINTY CARE of your mouth and neglect your pores, the myriad mouths of your skin? The pores are the safety valves of the body. If they be kept in perfect order by constant and intelligent bathing, a very general source of danger from disease is avoided. HAND SAPOLIO is unequalled as a gentle, efficacious pore-opener. It does not gloss them over, or chemically dissolve their health-giving oils, yet clears them thoroughly, by a method of its own.

AFTER A REFRESHING BATH with HAND SAPOLIO, every one of the 2,381,248 healthily-opened pores of your skin will shout as through a trumpet, "For this relief, much thanks." Five minutes with HAND SAPOLIO equals hours of so-called Health Exercises.

Don't argue, Don't infer, Try it!
Its use is a fine habit.
Its cost a trifle.

the spitting proclivities of the Doctor, had provided for his use a fancy china cuspidor. The Doctor, however, ignored its presence and continued spitting upon the floor of the veranda where they were seated. At the same time Mrs. Simmons kept moving the cuspidor gently into a more and more favorable position for the old gentleman's use.

Finally, becoming exasperated at the queer doings of his hostess, the Doctor with some warmth exclaimed,—

"Mrs. Simmons, if you don't move that thing I'm going to spit in it!"

Hugh A. C. Walker.

Social Settlement Visitor.—"Your daughter plays very well, Mrs. Smith, and has quite a talent for music."

Mrs. Smith.—"Sure, she inherits that. Her grandfather was killed with a blow of a cornet at a picnic."

Lilian Mack.

There'll be no Irish There A WOMAN sat in a street-car in a Canadian town one day when the car stopped at a crossing and another woman got in and sat beside the first woman, saying, "Well, well, Mrs. Fiewclose, wherever have you been all summer?"

"Oh, we were at the Lake."

"So were we—at Grand Bend."

"We were at Port Stanley," said the woman who had opened the oratorical contest.

"Have a nice time?"

"Well, not exactly. There's so many Irish there," she added with a weary look, but without so much as a glance about the car.

"Same way at the Bend—Irish, Irish everywhere."

A stout lady under a green hat that turned up behind sat in the seat immediately in front of the elocutionists. The stout lady turned and sized them up, but by this time they were dead to the world.

As the car rattled on they talked of everything and most everybody, and finally fetched up at the summer resorts with Irish for dessert.

By this time there was Irish stew in the front seat.

The stout person under the pea-green hat turned and shone on them. "Ladies," she began, "I've me give yez a bit uv advice—the nixt time ye get a holiday, yez better spend it in hell—there'll be no Irish there."

Cy Warman.

Too Much for Words A SMALL boy, aged three, was allowed the great privilege of coming to the table for dessert on the occasion of a favorite uncle dining there. When the dessert, sliced peaches, was served, the child was given one or two morsels on a plate. He surveyed them for a thoughtful moment, and looked in turn at his father's, mother's, and uncle's heaping platefuls. Then,—

"Muvver, is that your plate?"

SENATOR STEWART SAYS:

United States Senate, Washington, D. C.

I have found HAYNER WHISKEY exceptionally fine for table and medicinal purposes.



U. S. Senator from Nevada.

**THE ONLY WHISKEY WITH A NATIONAL REPUTATION FOR
HIGHEST QUALITY AND PERFECT PURITY.**

Uncle Sam, in the person of Ten Government Officials, is always in charge of every department of our distillery. During the entire process of distillation, after the whiskey is stored in barrels in our warehouses, during the seven years it remains there, from the very grain we buy to the whiskey you get, Uncle Sam is constantly on the watch. We dare not take a gallon of our own whiskey out of our own warehouse unless he says it's all right. And when he does say so, that whiskey goes direct to you, with all its original strength, richness and flavor, carrying a **UNITED STATES REGISTERED DISTILLER'S GUARANTEE OF PURITY and AGE**, and saving the dealers' enormous profits. That's why **HAYNER WHISKEY** is so good and yet so cheap. That's why we have half a million satisfied customers. That's why you should try it. Your money back if you're not satisfied.

HAYNER WHISKEY

4 FULL QUARTS \$3.20
EXPRESS CHARGES PAID BY US.

OUR OFFER We will send you **FOUR FULL QUART BOTTLES** of HAYNER SEVEN-YEAR-OLD RYE for \$3.20. and we will pay the express charges. Try it and if you don't find it all right and as good as you ever used or can buy from anybody else at any price, then send it back at our expense and your \$3.20 will be returned to you by next mail. Just think that offer over. How could it be fairer? If you are not perfectly satisfied you are not out a cent. We ship in a plain sealed case, no marks to show what's inside.

Orders for Ariz., Cal., Col., Idaho, Mont., Nev., N. Mex., Ore., Utah., Wash., or Wyo. must be on the basis of 4 QUARTS for \$4.00 by EXPRESS PREPAID or 20 Quarts for \$16.00 by FREIGHT PREPAID.

ESTABLISHED
1866.

THE HAYNER DISTILLING COMPANY,

DISTILLERY
TROY, OHIO.

DAYTON, OHIO.

ST. LOUIS, MO.,

ST. PAUL, MINN.,

ATLANTA, GA.,



Please mention LIPPINCOTT'S MAGAZINE when answering this advertisement.

"Yes, dear."

"Favver, is that your plate?"

"Yes, sonnie."

"Uncle Billy, is that your plate?"

"Yes, boy."

"Is vis mine?"

"Yes, dear."

"Well, goll-darn!"

Helen Sherman Griffith.

**The
Bishop's Face**

It is related of Bishop Potter that at the close of a lecture engagement in rural New York he was approached by a farmer, who, addressing him familiarly, said,—

"Pard, h'ain't I seen yore pictur' some'ers in th' paypers?"

With becoming modesty the Bishop replied, "It is possible."

"Well, pard," continued the farmer, "won't you please tell me what you was cured of?"

Silas Xavier Floyd.

POLLY JOHNSON

By Dixie Wolcott

How come, Polly, it's de fashion
Fer de married folks ter split?
'Pears de mo' aristocratiker,
Sure de mo' divo'ced dey git!
Can you s'picion *us* a-partin'
Arter all we's done an' sed?
Lor'! I'd 'bout ez soon dis nigger
Would be parted from his head.

Polly Johnson, we's been married
Right smart on ter forty year;
It's a-whitenin' 'round yo' temples,
But yo' voice ez sweet an' clear
Ez de days I use ter hear you
Singin' 'bove de creamy foam,
An' I'd jine you in de medder
Fer ter tote de milk-pails home.

Polly Johnson, heaps o' trouble
Projicked wid us in our day,
Hard times, sickness, death, tergedder,
Hab come shufflin' 'long de way;
But dey's jes' done 'peared ter make us
Tug de closer at de bit,
An' de happy days between 'em
Up in hebbin I won't fergit.



Rambler

16 horse power complete with canopy top, side basket, horn and lamps, only \$1,350.00 at the factory.

Rambler

Touring Cars

represent absolutely the highest values—our reputation is back of them. Eight models, \$650.00 to \$1,350.00 at the factory.

Thos. B. Jeffery & Co., Kenosha, Wis., U.S.A.
Chicago, 504 Wabash Ave. Boston, 145 Columbus Ave.

Model "L"

\$1,350

Union Pacific

Only 3 Days

Chicago to Portland

TWO THROUGH TRAINS DAILY.

Fine equipment. Fast time.
Good service. Low rates.
Daylight ride along the
Columbia River.

Inquire at

176 Washington Street, Boston
287 Broadway, New York City
830 Chestnut Street, Philadelphia

903 Olive Street, St. Louis
53 East Fourth Street, Cincinnati
193 South Clark Street, Chicago

or of

E. L. LOMAX, G. P. & T. A., U. P. R. R., Omaha, Neb.

Walnuts and Wine

Polly Johnson, we's got married
 Till we reach ole Jordan's sho',
 But I keep on cogitatin'
 'Bout divo'ces mo' an' mo';
 An' I's gwine ter say ter Gabr'el
 Fust thing Resurrection Mawn,—
 "Sir, how kin some folks git unmarried
 Any mo' dan git unbawn?"

**A Little Girl's
 Logic**

LITTLE MARGERY, aged five, a minister's daughter, is of a very nervous temperament. Thunder-storms always terrify her. Recently during an especially terrifying storm she was cowering on her father's lap. Thinking to soothe her, her father told her not to be so afraid—to be resigned, when she replied, sobbing vehemently,—

"But I don't want to be resigned; I don't want to leave here."

"Why, what do you mean, daughter?" the minister asked. "No one wants you to leave here."

"Well," replied Margery, "if I be resigned, I'll have to leave here, 'cause didn't we have to leave M—— when you resigned?"

Harold FitzHerbert.

"AND the Prodigal Son's mother!" exclaimed the visiting clergyman emotionally (the class squirmed)—"the Prodigal Son's mother—what of her? What must have been her feelings as she thought of her dear boy so far, far away, beyond the reach of her loving arms?" The stream of eloquence flowed to a finish. "And now," he said, "is there any little boy present who would like to ask any question or to make any remarks upon the story which we have just been discussing?"

Deep-seated reserve occupied the features of the class. Then the intellectual dignity of twelve years arose from a rear bench, Bible in hand, and clearly and coldly enunciated,—

"I find no evidence in Holy Writ that the Prodigal Son ever had a mother."

Alice Reid.

A MOTHER found her small daughter shut in a closet. "What are you doing in the dark, baby?"

"You said God was watching me all the time, so I thought I would come in here and give Him a rest."

J. Cooper Calvert.

A Remedy

THERE was recently in White Haven, Pennsylvania, an up-to-date Evangelist who secured a pot of yellow paint and decorated all the rocks along the Lehigh River with Bible texts or admonitions to be good. Among the sentences painted were some rather startling ones. At one place, up the river, he discovered a large rock with a fine, smooth surface, facing a much-used road. Across this he painted in foot-high letters,—

Thousands Pity You

If You Don't Know

The Sure Relief, Prevention, Cure
Now Dispensed the World Over by

Orangeine

Powders.



**"Easy to Carry," "Easy to Take," "Never Harms,"
"Produces Quickly the Desired Effect" on**

Colds, Headache, Grippe, Neuralgia, Fatigue, Stomach Upsets and "Those Every Day Ills of Life," "Saves time and money from worse than waste," "Increases life's energy and productivity. Assures ability to meet life's labors and engagements free from pain and suffering.

Expressions from Experience.

Mr. Wm. Hughes, a prominent banker, of Newport, R. I., says: "I can substantiate all claims you make for Orangeine, for I have seen it do wonderful work in my own family and among my friends."

Mr. Albert C. Smith, President Suffolk Hospital & Dispensary, 4 Charter St., Boston, Mass., writes: "Orangeine has fully proved its remedial value, and we are glad to say that we never allow our institution to be without this medicine."

Mr. C. A. Henderson, Austinburg, O., writes: "I would not be without Orangeine for a day. It is all and more than you claim for it."

Mr. J. W. Tillinghast, Buffalo, N. Y., writes: "During the past year, myself, and my family, including two little boys, have learned the high value of Orangeine. Incipient colds are quickly dispelled, headache stopped, physical or mental fatigue corrected."

Test and Information Free

10c Trial Package FREE
on receipt of request.

NOTE—Orangeine is now sold by all progressive druggists in 10c packages (2 powders); 25c (6 powders); 50c (15 powders); "Family Package" \$1.00 contains 35 powders—or mailed anywhere by
The Orangeine Chemical Co., 15 Michigan Avenue, Chicago.

THE WORLD'S GREATEST FAIR.—Mr. J. M. Studebaker, of South Bend, Indiana, president of the Studebaker Bros. Manufacturing Company, says in a letter addressed to Chief Willard A. Smith and Commander A. C. Baker of the Department of Transportation Exhibits: "My son and I desire to convey to you our sincere thanks for the courtesy shown us during our recent brief visit to St. Louis. We are interested beyond all manner of expectation. St. Louis is plainly to have a World's Fair far surpassing anything the world has yet seen. Its present promise challenges the wildest flights of the imagination. No one can conceive of what has been accomplished without seeing it. The scope of the enterprise is gigantic, its detail is bewildering, and the beauty and artistic combination of buildings, grounds, and water make of the place a region of enchantment. The visitor to the World's Fair at St. Louis will find himself in fairyland, in wonderland, and this without reference to what his experiences in sight-seeing have heretofore been. My fear is that this impressive fact is not going to be sufficiently well known either at home or abroad. The press should blaze with the subject from this time forward."

If I were to design an emblem of health, I should mount it on a bicycle, for I regard that form of exercise as perhaps the most wholesome ever invented. For years I have been an enthusiastic bicyclist, and wherever I find the road a good one, I am still devotedly attached to the pastime. I trust that this nation may always retain its rank as containing more bicyclers than any other.

RT. REV. A. MACKAY-SMITH, D.D., S.T.D.,

P. E. Bishop Coadjutor, Diocese of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, Pa.

"What are You Going to Do After Death?"

It was only a week, however, that the rock displayed this line alone, for an enterprising advertisement writer came along and painted under it,—

"Use Delta Oil—Good for Burns."

Butz S.

Free Translation

A LITTLE girl had been to Sunday-school and heard the story of Jesus saying, "Suffer little children to come unto me," and in telling her mother forgot the text.

After thinking intently for a moment she exclaimed, "Oh, I know! If you want to go to heaven, let me know."

S. W. H. R.

HARD TO PLEASE

By McLandburgh Wilson

THE newly rich offend us,
Our snubs they must endure,
The while with equal fervor
We cut the newly poor.

A Good Simile

THERE is a dear little Philadelphia girl, not yet three years old, who has a distinct dislike for kissing. She likes neither to kiss nor to be kissed. Recently she spent some time at the seashore, and her first day's experience with ocean bathing and her splashing about in the foamy wavelets made a great impression upon her. She thought of everything, as it were, in terms of the sea.

That same evening her older sister put her to bed. But the tot refused the good-night kiss.

"Aren't you going to kiss sister good-night, Kitty?" asked the older girl.

"No! I's not, Louise."

"Why not, Kitty?"

"'Cause I don' want to. I hates kisses. Kisses is so wrong. Dey slip-slop over your face just like ye wuz in bavin'."

F. H. L.

A Visible Object

A TESTY old gentleman forced to lay over an hour in Dull Town was cursing his fate, when a mild-mannered citizen strolled into the station and essayed conversation. Taking the many labels on the visitor's bag as a leader, he said,—

"You've travelled about quite a bit?"

"Yes."

"Ever seen a' Injun?"

"Many a one."

"Ever seen a Chinees?"

has
with
WIN
sure

Used by the Royal Families and Smart Hotels
throughout Europe

CEREBOS

TABLE SALT

NOURISHES

Used like plain salt for table and kitchen. Contains wheat phosphates, wanting in white bread owing to the removal of the bran.

Send for sample,
enough for the family

"CEREBOS," 78 Hudson St., New York

THE INFANT takes first to human milk; that failing, the mother turns at once to cow's milk as the best substitute. Borden's Eagle Brand Condensed Milk is a cow's milk scientifically adapted to the human infant. Stood first for forty-five years.

LOW RATES TO CALIFORNIA, ARIZONA, MEXICO, AND OTHER WESTERN POINTS.—Anyone desiring to make a trip to California, Arizona, Mexico, or other western points, either for business or pleasure, can do so now at a small cost.

Daily until April 29, 1904, inclusive, special one-way Colonist tickets will be sold via the Southern Railway at the rate of \$49.75 from Philadelphia to Los Angeles, San Francisco, and other points; corresponding low rates from other points.

The Southern Railway operates through personally conducted Excursion Sleepers from Washington to San Francisco without change, via Atlanta, New Orleans, and El Paso, leaving Washington at 7.10 P.M. every Monday, Wednesday and Friday. The berth-rate in these Sleepers is only \$8.50 to Pacific Coast points, two people being allowed to occupy one berth if desired. There are other new, convenient, and economical features connected with these Sleepers, which may be ascertained from CHARLES L. HOPKINS, District Passenger Agent, Southern Railway, 828 Chestnut Street, Philadelphia, Pa.



For Children While Cutting Their Teeth.

An Old and Well-Tried Remedy,

FOR OVER FIFTY YEARS.

MRS. WINSLOW'S SOOTHING SYRUP

has been used for over FIFTY YEARS by MILLIONS of MOTHERS for their CHILDREN WHILE TEETHING with PERFECT SUCCESS. IT SOOTHES THE CHILD, SOFTENS THE GUMS, ALLAYS ALL PAIN, CURES WIND COLIC, and is the best remedy for DIARRHŒA. Sold by all Druggists in every part of the world. Be sure and ask for *Mrs. Winslow's Soothing Syrup*, and take no other kind.

TWENTY-FIVE CENTS A BOTTLE.

"Thousands of them."

"Ever seen a Jap?"

"Yes."

"Ever seen a Jew?"

"Yes. D——"

"Ever seen a——"

The testy old gentleman could stand it no longer, and, rising to his full height, shouted in stentorian tones, "Did you ever see a FOOL?"

The mild-mannered citizen let his mild blue eye rest on the irate traveller a moment, then in a sweet, low voice replied,—

"Yes, I hev."

E. P.

DOMESTIC FORESIGHT

By Julia Whedom Mitchell

HE didn't live in Kansas,

But he was a knowing feller;

Before he married Number Two

He built a cyclone cellar.

The Flight of Time

AUNT KIZZY had held for many years the responsible office of general supervisor of the children in the family of her mistress, and when the arduous duties of the nursery were assigned to a younger woman she still retained what she considered the high privilege of escorting the smaller children to the Sunday-school and occupying the seat behind them while they were receiving instruction. One Sunday afternoon the teacher told in detail the story of the crucifixion, and in her effort to impress the little ones with every circumstance which their young minds would be likely to retain she said solemnly, "Now, remember, children, all this happened—really happened—just nineteen hundred years ago."

Aunt Kizzy, who was as well acquainted with the teacher as she was with the mistress whose slave she had been for so many years, looked up with a most patronizing smile and exclaimed, "Law-a-massy, Miss Dolly, how time do fly!"

Z. C.

Wanted— A Pin

It was Mabel's first appearance at church and she was rather fidgety. First she wanted one thing, then another. Finally she decided that she must have a pin, so she asked for one from her father. He had none. Then she tried her mother; but her mother too had none. Mabel's longing had been increased with her ill success, so she climbed upon the pew and shouted at the top of her small voice,—

"Has anyone in dis trowd dot a pin?"

Francis Williams.